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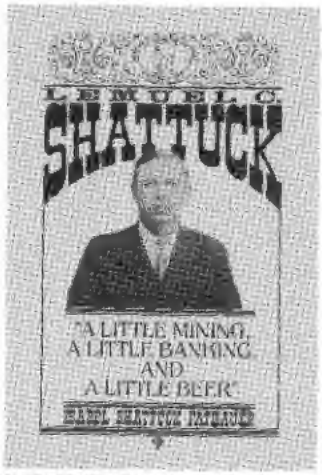

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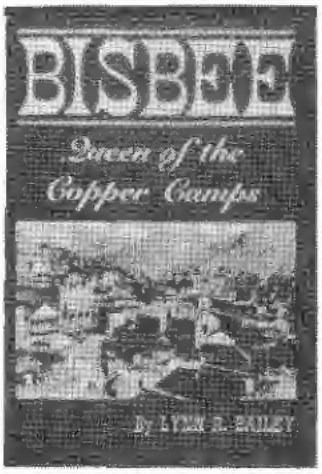

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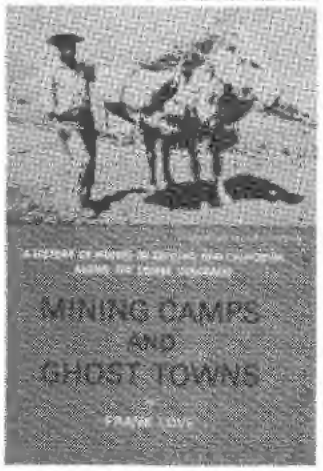

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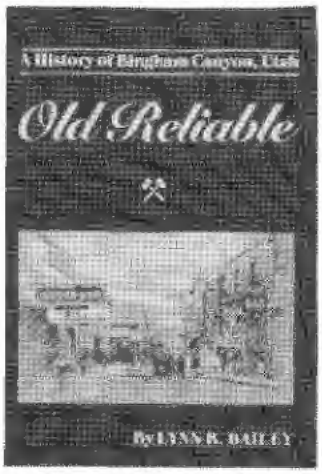

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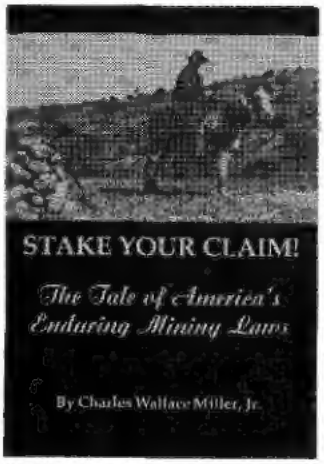

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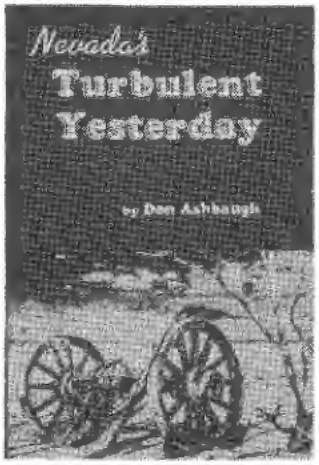

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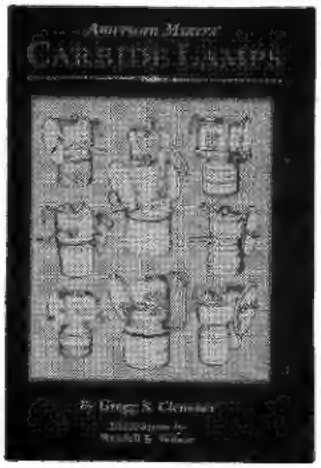

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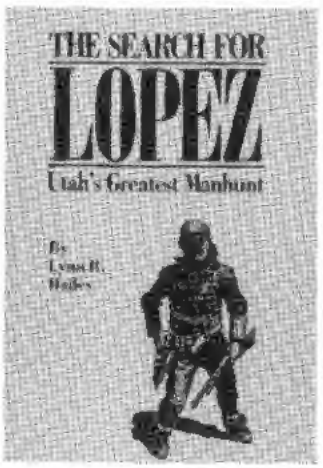

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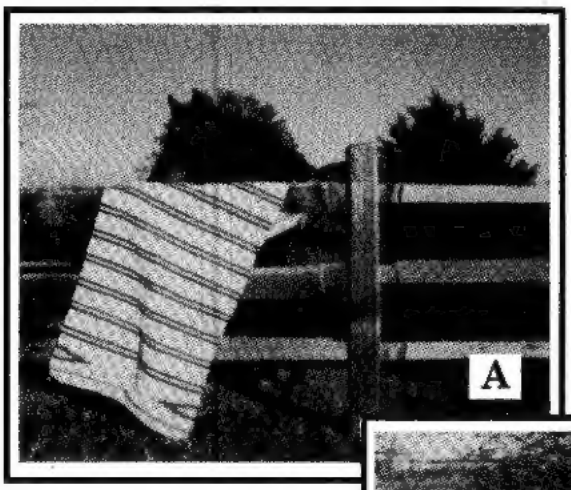

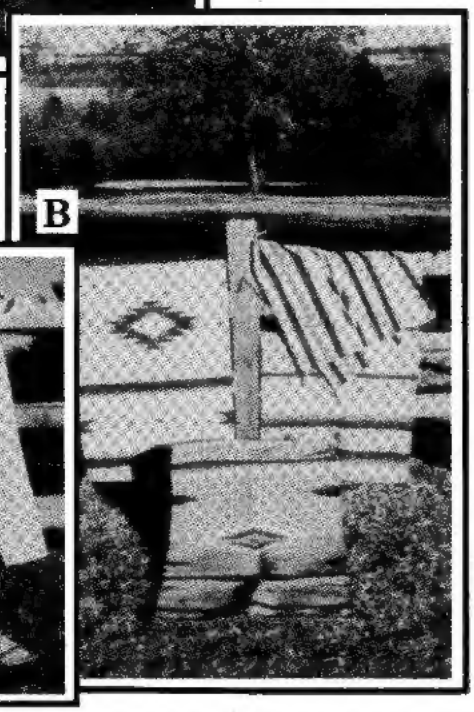

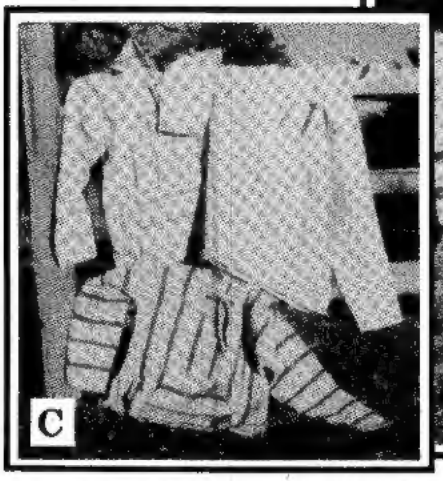

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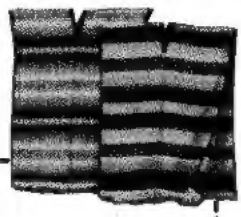

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From the Editor

Howdy, folks!

Have you ever wondered which western state was the scene of the most Indian fights or which year witnessed the greatest violence between Indians and whites? Do you have trouble keeping track of Custer's antics and exploits in the West? Can you name all the Indian Wars recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor and the engagements they fought in? Do you occasionally find yourself unable to remember the dates of important battles?

If you answered yes to one or more of those questions, then you won't want to be without the newest volume from our Barbed Wire Press imprint. I don't ordinarily use these twenty column inches of space to inflict sales pitches on you all; howsomever, this new book is one that I'm mighty proud of, and it's one that will be an essential addition to the library of every Indian Wars reader.

The book's official title, *Fighting Men of the Indian Wars: A Biographical Encyclopedia of the Mountain Men, Soldiers, Cowboys, and Pioneers Who Took Up Arms During America's Westward Expansion*, is a dadblamed mouthful. But it does tell you exactly what the book is about. And if I tell you the author is Bill O'Neal, who has written many books and articles on the Old West—not to mention this magazine's regular column, "Great Western Gunfights"—you'll know it's a good 'un.

Fighting Men of the Indian Wars might have been titled "Indian Fighters from A to Z," for it covers all of the most important western Indian fighters, and many minor figures as well. As the title suggests, mountain men, soldiers, cowboys, pioneers, and others are included. Material on the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the Fetterman Fight, and the Wounded Knee Massacre is abundant. But you'll also read about lesser known figures such as Caspar Collins and James Oakes and even the shadowy Mark Head, or "Markhead" as he was also known.

Much like Bill's popular and respected *Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters*, *Fighting Men of the Indian Wars* includes biographical sketches of each individual entrant and then goes on to detail in chronological order his combat experience. Thus it examines the most important—and controversial—battles from the differing viewpoints of the various men involved and includes a representative sample of the countless minor skirmishes and incidents as well.

The only problem with calling the book "Indian Fighters from A to Z" was that it starts with John Breckenridge Babcock and ends with Samuel Baldwin Marks Young. And we didn't think "Indian Fighters from B to Y" would be a very catchy title.

In addition to the biographies making up the main part of the book, Bill has compiled a fascinating body of details on the Indian Wars in general, and he discusses them at length in an extensive introduction. Among the introductory sections is one entitled "What the Indians Called Them." It tells of the origins of such unusual monikers as "Gray Wolf," "Hard Backsides," and "The One Who Limps Twice."

That section is followed by one on "Chronological Statistics," which lists fights by year and state, providing insight into the general course of the Indian Wars in the West. Another section, "Cowboys and Indians" looks at what really happened when those two groups clashed. Contrary to what the makers of film and fiction might have you believe, the Indians usually got the better of the cowboys.

Sections on "Extraordinary Exploits of the Warriors" and "Extraordinary Exploits of the Indian Fighters" note many acts of remarkable valor done by men and women on both sides of the conflict. Those two sections are complemented by another on "Combat Techniques of the Indian Wars," explaining the tactics of white men and Indians alike.

Finally, a section on "The Medal of Honor" lists every Indian Wars recipient of that award and cites the battle and action for which it was given. That section provides a unique perspective on America's changing attitudes toward both the medal and the Indian Wars during the post-Civil War period.

Illustrated with historical photos throughout, *Fighting Men of the Indian Wars* is a useful, reliable resource, and with its extensive bibliography it is an excellent guide to further research. Indian Wars fanatics and western history buffs will refer to it again and again.

John Joerschke

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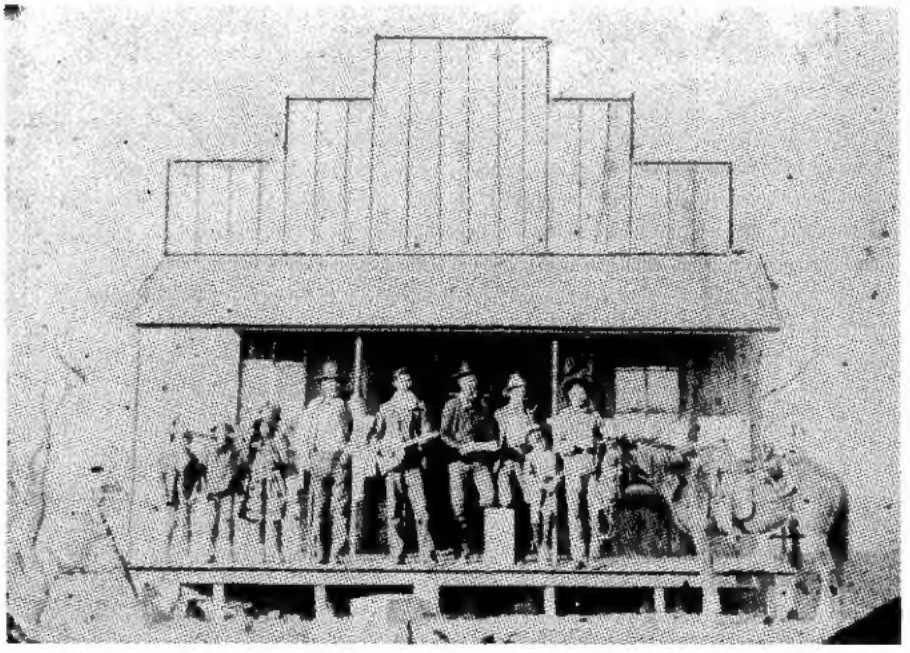
Photos of the Olive Store?

Maybell H. Wackwitz sent me two photos, along with some pretty solid evidence that they could be of the old Olive Store, which figured in my book, *The Ladder of Rivers*. The store was near Thrall, Texas, where the famous Olive family of trail drivers lived. A photo historian has established that the pictures were taken between 1875 and 1890, probably in the early 1880s.

Print Olive, an ex-Confederate soldier, made a name for himself in the cattle wars in Texas in the 1860s and 1870s, as well as in one of Nebraska's greatest criminal trials in 1878. He drove 15,000 head of Longhorn cattle to Nebraska in 1876 and settled them on the Dismal River range. TRUE WEST has published stories on Olive's life and times in the past.

Anyone who can identify the people in the photo or who has a similar photo should write to Ms. Wackwitz at 4302 Avenue F, Austin, Texas 78751.—**Harry E. Chrisman, 10245 West 14th Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80215.**



Maybell H. Wackwitz would like to hear from anyone who can help her identify the places or the faces in these photos.

No Sheriff For Shakespeare

R.K. DeArment's article, "The Deadly Deputy" (TRUE WEST, November 1991) about southwestern New Mexico lawman Dan Tucker contains several statements that I know to be mistakes and others that I find doubtful.

In the first place, I find it hard to believe that Dan Tucker actually served as a deputy sheriff in Shakespeare. Oldtimers here spoke of Shakespeare as a town with no law. My mother, the late Rita Hill (who came here in 1935), and I have done much research on Shakespeare history. If Dan Tucker was a deputy here, why did he not make any arrests? We could not find a single criminal case involving Shakespeare citizens during the 1870s or 1880s.

Tucker's involvement with the hanging of Russian Bill and Sandy King is also very nebulous. I believe he told some stories about it in his old age, but I have no idea whether he was the type of man who could be believed. Some oldtimers connected him with the hanging in some way; others did not mention any law officer's being in town. Anna Ownby, a friend of my mother, was waiting tables in the Ownby's little restaurant in the new railroad camp of Lordsburg when two men brought Russian Bill back from Deming. She was most impressed with Russian Bill's handsome appearance but did not notice or comment on his two captors. If Dan Tucker had been so famous a lawman hereabouts, wouldn't she have mentioned him also?

Mr. DeArment's account of the hanging itself contains several errors. Russian Bill's name, according to mining records, was William R. Tettenborn (not "Woldemar"). Far from being an outlaw, he was involved in many mining deals, filing mining claims, buying and selling, and even being elected district recorder of a little mining district about forty miles southeast of Shakespeare. The hanging did not take place in the Stratford Hotel at all but

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in the Grant House stage station dining room.

Bean Belly Smith never owned the Stratford. Some say that he was employed as assistant stage keeper at the Grant House at the time of the hanging, but there is no proof. Anna Woods owned the Stratford Hotel, and in 1879 Bean Belly Smith had shot her son, Ross Woods, in the Stratford's dining room. Perhaps that is why some authors want to connect Bean Belly with the Stratford.

Many years of research into the history of Shakespeare and surrounding area have taught me the questions about our history have few easy answers. Since we had no newspaper, the historian must depend on other sources. However, the civil records of Grant County give many clues as well as the correct spelling of names. Those records are our best source of facts.— **Janaloo Hill, Shakespeare Ghost Town, Box 253, Lordsburg, New Mexico 88045.**

R.K. DeArment's Response: I based my report of Dan Tucker's involvement in the Russian Bill-Sandy King affair primarily on a story in the *El Paso Lone Star* of November 16, 1881, which told of the arrest by "Deputy Sheriff Tucker" of "two 'rustlers,' 'Russian Bill' and 'Sandy King,' from the southern part of Grant County." That report left no doubt that Russian Bill was considered an outlaw: "Russian Bill often declared that no man living could arrest him, but when he found Tucker was on his track he gave himself up without any resistance." According to that account, Tucker deposited his prisoners in the Shakespeare jail on Monday, November 14, and that night the two men, "noted horse and cattle thieves," were lynched. Although I am well aware that contemporary newspaper reports are not always reliable, in the absence of contradictory evidence they can be accepted.

Russian Bill's last name has been cited in various accounts as Tettenborn, Tetenborn, Tethenborn, and Teflin and his given name as William Rogers, Waldemar, Woldemar, and Feador. I used the name ascribed to him by the usually reliable Ramon Adams in *Six-Guns and Saddle Leather* (p. 612). The mining records Ms. Hill has examined should be the best source of Russian Bill's real name.

By most accounts the hanging of Russian Bill and King indeed took place in the Grant House as Ms. Hill points out.

Ms. Hill's questions and comments are particularly pertinent, as she and her

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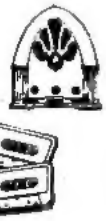

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parents have lived for many years at the site of old Shakespeare and have made a study of the town's history. If she were to share her intimate knowledge of Shakespeare's past with an article in the pages of TRUE WEST, I am sure many readers, including myself, would find it most interesting.

Editor's Note: As a matter of fact, we just happen to have an article by Ms. Hill in our files. We will be publishing it later this spring.

Disputed Account

W.C. Jameson's entire article, "Last Stand of the Mescalero Apaches" (TRUE WEST, December 1991), was taken from James Gillett's *Six Years With the Texas Rangers*. Because Gillett was inaccurate, so is Jameson.

Gillett and Jameson describe a series of events beginning with the Mescaleros deserting Victorio the night before October 14, 1880, then attacking an emigrant train in Bass Canyon, then attacking the Mills patrol in Vieja Pass in the Vieja Mountains. In truth the attack in Bass Canyon, which runs through the southern foothills of the Carrizo Mountains, had taken place the previous May. The attack on the Mills patrol took place the previous June and did not take place in Vieja Pass but in the Canon Viejo in the Chinati Mountains. It is more plausible that the Mescaleros were with Nana's band than that they had deserted Victorio.

Gillett is the original source of the names Morgan and Crenshaw for the driver and passenger on the stage. The 1880 El Paso County census does not list a driver named Morgan, but it does include a black driver named Martine Martin.

Jameson himself errs in giving the date of the attack on the stage in Quitman Canyon as January 13 rather than January 6, and by placing Bosque Bonito above Indian Hot Springs rather than twenty miles below near the confluence of Green River with the Rio Grande.—**R.S. Bolling, 2404 Limpia, Pecos, Texas 79772.**

W.C. Jameson's Response: As in most historical occurences, there are multiple interpretations of the last days of the Mescalero Apaches in Texas. For many years, that particular event has been a topic of serious study by military, Indian, and southwestern historians. None of them agree completely on what transpired.

James Gillett's fine book of reminiscences *Six Years With the Texas Rangers*, first published by the University of Nebraska Press in 1921, is a principal reference for anyone interested in the topic. With regard to my article in TRUE WEST, however, it was not the only source. In addition to Gillett, I also consulted the writings of the great Texas historian Walter Prescott Webb, as well as numerous documents, journals, and memoirs in books, libraries, and historical publications. Furthermore, I interviewed two military historians, both of whom provided information and clarification relative to the sequence of events leading to the Indians' final conquest.

In addition to liberal use of the above references, I have personally explored much of the area covered in the investigation on foot, horseback, and by vehicle. Because I essentially grew up in the area I am also familiar with most of the local versions of events that were handed down in the oral tradition.

If Mr. Bolling had spent as much time as I and others have researching this

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particular historical episode, he would find adequate reason to reconsider and revise his statements regarding certain chronological sequences and geographic perspectives.

Elusive Facts

I very much appreciated your warm tribute to the late historian C.L. "Doc" Sonnichsen. Your comments were well-considered and appropriate.

We have a large file of your publications at hand in the Military Archives and Records Service library, and sometimes they are the single best source for a point of information or a photo.

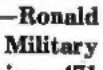
I am hoping that your readership could help us with a few elusive pieces of information: Tillson Lever Harrison was a Canadian doctor who served as a medico with Villa forces in Chihuahua City during the summer of 1915. Harrison loved Mexico and had made several attempts to make himself useful in the region. Apparently he had been involved in a punitive expedition in 1913 against Yaqui Indian bands.

I am also looking for information concerning a tribe of Indians known as the Brotherton Band, which apparently originated at Brothertown settlement on Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin. A large portion of the band migrated to Minnesota, and my suspicion is that some of these men fought United States forces during the uprising of 1862.

If anyone knows of the military history of the Brotherton Band or has encountered Tillson Lever Harrison's name in old border newspapers, I would be thrilled to hear from them.

Your publications are widely read in western Canada, as nothing comparable is being published on our side of the line. Keep up the excellent work.—**Ronald Jack, Researcher and Editor, Military Archives and Records Service, 471 Mountain Street, Hinton, Alberta, Canada T7V 1J9.**

Editor's Note: Thanks for the kind words. Nothing comparable is being published on our side of the line either!



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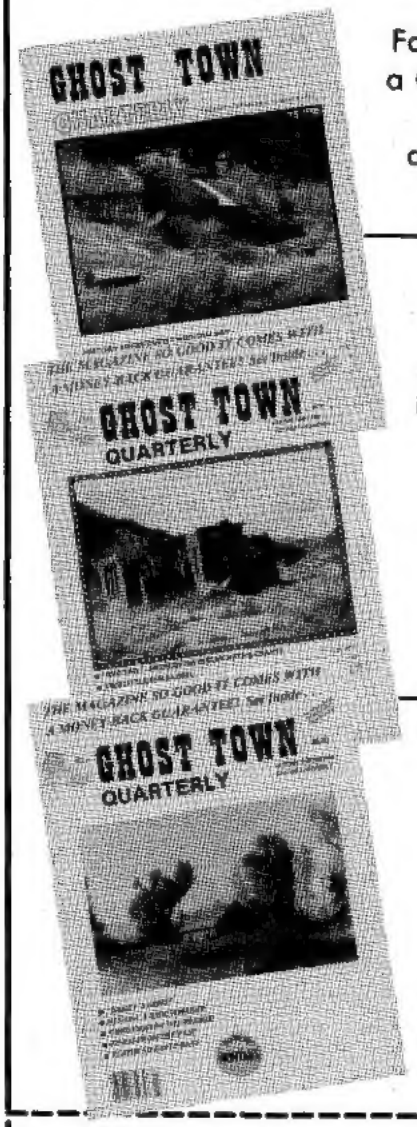

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Northwest Indian Exhibit Open

"Dressed with Beads: Traditions of Adornment on the Plateau," an exhibition of beaded clothing and other ornamental artifacts of the Columbia River Plateau tribes, will open at the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon, on March 14 and run through September 20. The exhibition takes its title from a journal entry by William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition, who remarked upon seeing the Nez Perce in 1805 that they were "dressed with Beeds which are generally white Sea Shells & Mother of Pirl." It focuses on traditions of adornment in the Plateau area and how objects of adornment were exchanged.

Featured in the exhibit will be up to 100 items from the museum's extensive Doris Swayze Bounds Collection, including contour floral beaded bags, a ceremonial pony beaded dress, dentalium shell necklaces, and other objects of adornment from the Warm Springs, Umatilla, Nez Percé, Yakima, and other Indian groups. Native artifacts from other regions will also be incorporated, illustrating the extensive exchange of ideas and goods among Indian cultures.

To the Indians of the Columbia River Plateau, adornment served as both personal and tribal art. Highly symbolic, it acted as a form of lightweight, portable wealth for a mobile people, as well as an element of sheer beauty in their daily lives. Some ornamentation had profound spiritual significance.

In "Dressed with Beads," these traditions of adornment through time are

Anasazis To Be Lecture Topic

The Anasazi Indians—the *Ancient Ones*—are the subject of the Eighth Annual Southwest Institute at the University of New Mexico in Santa Fe. The 1992 summer program, entitled "The Ancient Ones of the Four Corners Area," will center around a ten-day lecture series to be held in Santa Fe July 6–17.

In the lecture series, thirty speakers will provide a comprehensive overview of the Four Corners area. Although the lecture series will highlight the archaeology of the Anasazi, participants will also hear about the geology, ecology, history, and current issues of the areas the Indians formerly occupied.

Participants may earn three hours of graduate or undergraduate college credit, or those who do not wish to take exams may audit the programs. Three daily lectures are scheduled between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., allowing plenty of time to visit the Santa Fe area and join several arranged afternoon field excursions. Arrangements are being made for accommodations near the lecture facility in Santa Fe, and for a van pool system from Albuquerque. Van pool arrangements and Santa Fe accommodations will be on a first-come basis and will require a deposit for reservations.

Four six-day field programs have been scheduled for participants to explore the Anasazi areas. They are planned to offer visits to both popular, frequently-toured locations, and sites that are unfamiliar to visitors.

Two of the field courses, one beginning June 15 and another beginning September 27, are designed as non-credit academic tours. They will allow participants to travel with six interdisciplinary faculty experts for a set field fee without undergoing the expense and time of university registration.

Two other field courses, beginning July 19 and July 27, are offered for credit as university classes. They require registration for three credit hours and are designed to accommodate students from the lecture program. Participants may audit if they want to avoid writing a field paper. People who wish to pay for an academic tour may join these groups, space permitting. Travel for the six days in the field will be in air-conditioned vans which will enable the group to reach remote and isolated sites. The field tour will include the Chacoan settlement, as well as the cultural complex of the Chaco Canyon.

With on-site lectures about art, architecture, and land use, the programs will explore the balcony ruins of Canyon de Chelly, the cliff houses and pueblo ruins of the Mesa Verde culture, and the remote tower ruins of the Hovenweep area. Talks and field guide material will relate to the ecological and geological wonders of the Colorado Plateau. Site visits will include dramatic landforms, such as Monument Valley, the Goosenecks of the San Juan, and Shiprock.

Participants will learn about the current cultural landscapes by visiting the resource areas for mining and agriculture that have evolved over the last century. Visits are planned to trading posts (with shopping time allowed) and to administrative centers throughout the Navajo and Ute reservations. Accommodations will be in first class facilities at Chinle, Arizona; Mexican Hat, Utah; Cortez, Colorado; and Farmington, New Mexico.

For further information about the lecture and field courses, or for a complete program brochure, contact the Southwest Institute at 505-277-2828, or the University of New Mexico Center for Graduate Studies at 1-800-243-9499.

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shown in four major period displays featuring decorated men's, women's, and children's clothing. Bags, headgear, horse equipment, cradles, tools, and footwear are included. Some groupings highlight design elements such as patriotic motifs. Historic photographs, maps, and illustrations help provide context.

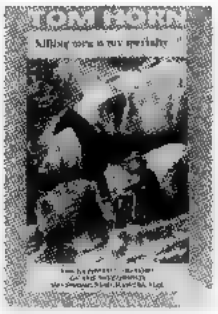
Methods of exchange are central to the display. In the ethnographic plateau, groups of Indians traveled widely to utilize a broad range of natural resources. Mutual exploitation of these resources required much movement of localized resources between areas, with frequent exchanges of goods for many different reasons. This system affirmed complex social relations and insured the diffusion of ideas and practices, as well as the dispersal of goods.

The introduction of the horse into the plateau in the 1700s made travel easier and widened the scope of exchange within plateau culture and with adjacent regions, such as the Northern Plains. Because of the horse, ideas and materials were more rapidly diffused and absorbed.

Indians used several modes of material exchange, including local trade between related bands and villages; formal trade between individual trading partners from different tribes; opportunistic exchange between different tribes; mass exchange among many tribes gathered annually at large trade centers; and personal or family gift giving.

Almost everything Indians produced or used in their seasonal or daily cycles was traded. This included hides, seeds, roots, mats, horses, berries, twine, pigment, skin robes, baskets, bags, salmon and meat in various forms, feathers, and tools and implements. Some of the most valued and most frequently exchanged goods included items used for adornment, such as marine shell imported from the Pacific Coast at least 10,000 years ago. Dentalia, abalone, olivella,

(continued on page 12)



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Auction to Honor Joe

The Twenty-Fourth Annual C.M. Russell Auction of Original Western Art will feature not only the sale of western artworks, but three western art seminars as well. It will be held March 19–22 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls, Montana.

Honorary chairmen for the event will be Joan and Dale Stauffer of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Joan is the author of *Behind Every Man: The Life of Nancy Russell*, the only book written about the wife of noted western artist Charles M. Russell. Joan's husband Dale did much of the research for the book.

The honored guest will be acclaimed western artist Joe Beeler of Sedona, Arizona. A pioneer in contemporary western art, Beeler's activities helped found the Cowboy Artists of America in 1965. On March 21 Beeler is scheduled to speak about how Russell's work has influenced his own.

In addition to Beeler's session, two other seminars are planned. On March 19, A.P. Hays of Arizona West Galleries in Scottsdale, Arizona, will conduct a seminar celebrating the one-hundredth birthday of Will James, a native of Prior, Montana. The next day Ginger Renner, an authority on Russell's works, will conduct a seminar on the bas-relief bronze panels that Browning, Montana, sculptor Bob Scriver and Russell expert, the late Fred Renner, created for the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls. The panels depict twenty episodes of Russell's life. Scriver will assist with the seminar, and Norma Ashby, one of the founders of the C.M. Russell Art Auction, will act as commentator.

Provo, Utah, artist Michael Coleman; Stewart Johnson, owner of Settler's

High Desert Museum

(continued from page 11)

seeds, feathers, bone, horn, porcupine quills, teeth, paint, and other resources were used for decoration on clothing, hair, baskets, ceremonial items, and everyday utensils.

Marine shell was an easily marketed item because it was durable, adaptable to a variety of uses, lightweight, beautiful, and had limited but reliable availability. Dentalium, a curved, cylindrical mollusk shell from Puget Sound, was especially prized as an ornament, as a funeral offering, and often as a standard of value for trade.

European goods were readily adapted for use in the traditional art forms when they arrived on the plateau in the 1800s. Glass beads, brass bells, coins, ribbons, fabrics, mirrors, and various metal objects were incorporated into native finery. By the time of white settlement in the region in the 1840s, glass beads were used in quantity and were highly prized for their colors and forms. They could be sewn to almost any flexible surface and were easy to obtain in trade.

By the 1870s, most Plateau Indians were living on reservations, frequently in combinations of groups from widespread geographic origins. This mixing not only accelerated the spread of traditional techniques and styles, but encouraged rapid development of new artistic forms. As access to native materials declined, ornamentation using glass beads grew.

The Indian unity movement was increasing intertribal contact and exchange among Indians throughout North America by the mid-twentieth century. Among plateau tribes today, as across the continent, beadwork arts are a major form of artistic expression of personal and tribal heritage.

"Dressed with Beads" is produced by the High Desert Museum. It is part of the annual changing exhibits program supported by the Ben B. Cheney Foundation, ARCO, and Pacific Health and Life Insurance Company.

The High Desert Museum is six miles south of Bend, Oregon, on U.S. Highway 97. It is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every day except New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. There is an admission fee; however, museum members and children four years old and younger enter free.

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West Galleries in Tucson, Arizona; and Kalispell, Montana, art collector Dr. Van Kirk Nelson will serve as art jurists and select about 250 pieces of art for sale at major auctions on March 20 and 21. Each year artists and dealers from across the United States and Canada submit 500 to 600 works of art for consideration.

Ticket holders may attend a gala reception at the Russell Museum March 19, followed by the Charlie Russell Birthday Party and Ball at the Heritage Inn. Two additional receptions will be held at the Heritage Inn on March 20 and 21 in conjunction with two quick-draw auctions and the major auctions. A chuckwagon brunch will be held March 20 at which the Best of Show, Jurists' Choice, and People's Choice awards for best painting and best sculpture will be presented.

Winners of the 1993 Commemorative Competition will also be announced. Nearly 1,000 artists were invited to submit a painting or sculpture that best exemplifies the spirit of C.M. Russell and his love of the Old West. A winner in each category will receive a cash prize of $5,000 from the Great Falls Ad Federation. A signed and numbered limited edition of each will be made and sold. Twenty to forty pieces of art work submitted but not chosen as the grand winners will be on display at the Russell Museum during the auction and sold by the intent to purchase method. Successful buyers will be notified on March 21 prior to an artist's autograph party.

The birthday party and ball, seminars, and 102 exhibit rooms are all open to the public. Visitors to the exhibit rooms can purchase art directly. For more information contact Russell Art Auction, P.O. Box 634, Great Falls, Montana 59503. The phone number is (406) 761-6453.

Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Information on scheduled events should be submitted at least four months prior to the event. Items on historic places are also welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.

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Answer Man

By CHUCK PARSONS

The Centralia Massacre

Civil War Missouri was a breeding ground for outlaws who went on to plague the Old West. One of the most notorious events there was the Centralia Massacre, where guerrilla leader "Bloody Bill" Anderson and his men shot a group of Union soldiers in cold-blood. Mabel S. Eldridge, 6335 Sweet-Ola Highway, Sweet, Idaho 83670, wrote to ask if there is a list of the men killed there, as she may be related to one of them.

Anderson and his men had taken over the town on September 27, 1864, and were on the rampage when a train came in. Among the passengers were some Union soldiers on furlough—some were ill and unable to fight.

Anderson took over the train and ordered the soldiers out and into a line. From them he picked Sergeant Thomas M. Goodman to hold as a hostage to exchange for captured guerrilla Cave Wyatt. Anderson had the rest of the soldiers brutally shot with no chance to fight or escape. Among those killed were Joseph H. Arnold, William R. Barnum, Joseph H. Carpenter, Joshia Comer, George W. Dilley, Owen P. Gore, Charles T. Hildebiddle, James F. Holley, Charles E. Madera, James C. Moberly, Edward M. Pace, Valentine P. Peters, James Robinson, Caswell Rose, John Russell, James W. Thomas, Martin Trail, and Oscar G. Williams. All were from either Iowa or Missouri.

Goodman later escaped from his guerrilla captors; Cave Wyatt was hanged. Later the same day several hundred of the guerrillas under Anderson fought an engagement with Major A.E.V. Johnson and were victorious. A young Jesse James was in this fight and is credited with killing Johnson.

Anderson had but a month to live. On October 27 he was killed in another sharp engagement in Ray County, Missouri.

Fighting Mountain Men

William Henry Ashley was a famous mountain man in his own right and employed many of the men who became American legends. Debbie Parrish, 23890 Rhodes Avenue, Perris, California 92570, knew that one of Ashley's parties was attacked by Indians but wanted to know by which tribe and where.

The attack was by the Arikara Indians on the Missouri River in South Dakota on June 2, 1823. Ashley's group was part of the Missouri Fur Company. The fight lasted about fifteen minutes but the toll was high: fifteen of Ashley's party were killed, many more were wounded. Among other noted mountain men there were Hugh Glass and Jedediah Smith. After the fight, the men moved their camp about twenty-five miles downstream to a point just below the mouth of the Moreau River in South Dakota.

Correcting a James Story

Stories abound about the lives and deaths of Frank and Jesse James. Dewey P. Parker, Route 2, Box 297-B, Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674, said that he had read that, in the latter part of his life, Frank made his home near Nashville, Tennessee, and was buried in a small cemetery in Tennessee near the Alabama state line. Mr. Parker wanted to know if that story was true.

The story is not true. Frank James died at his home near Kearney, Missouri, on February 18, 1915. His body was cremated and the ashes were buried in a family plot in Hill Park cemetery in Independence, Missouri. His wife, Annie, was buried beside him. The cemetery is located at 20th Street and Willow Avenue. A marker indicates the grave.

Goldfield Hoax?

The Thoen stone, near Spearfish, South Dakota, allegedly bears evidence that gold was discovered in the Black Hills as early as 1834. Albert N. Carlson, Route 1, Box 44, Pomona, Kansas 66076 wrote to find out more about this marker.

The Thoen stone is supposedly the oldest existing record of the discovery of gold in the Black Hills. Found in 1887 by Louis Thoen, it is inscribed with a message reading, "Came to these hills in 1833 seven of us DeLacompt, Ezra Kind, G.W. Wood, T. Brown, R. Kent, Wm. King, Indian Crow. All died but me

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Ezra Kind. Killed by Ind[ians]. beyond the high hill got our gold in 1834." On the reverse side is carved, "Got all the gold we could carry our ponys all got by the Indians I have lost my gun and nothing to eat and Indians hunting me."

Frank Thomas of Spearfish devoted years to studying the stone but was unable to present enough solid evidence to prove the authenticity of the stone's message. Louis Thoen was a stone mason, thus was capable of creating a hoax. Although the Thoen stone may have been a clever hoax, miners were in the Black Hills as early as the 1830s. Today the Thoen stone is in the Adams Memorial Museum in Deadwood.

"Deaf Charley"

The Wild Bunch continues to be one of the most popular outlaw gangs of the American West. Linda Van Dolah Hanks, 260 American Cyn Number 138, Vallejo, California 94589, asks about one of their number, O.C. "Deaf Charley" Hanks.

Orlando Camillo Hanks was the son of Wyatt Hanks and Laura Amanda De Moss Hanks, born in 1861 in DeWitt County, Texas. As he was from DeWitt County, some writers have put him in the Sutton-Taylor feud, but that is incorrect. The feud was over by the time O.C. was old enough to hold a gun.

He became a cowboy and got into trouble at an early age. He was charged with rape in Texas and murder in New Mexico, then headed for Montana to be a cowboy. He was arrested in 1892 for train robbery, jailed, and released April 30, 1901. He then joined the Wild Bunch. He participated in some of their robberies, including the Great Northern train robbery near Wagner, Montana, July 3, 1901.

After the robbery some of the gang headed to Texas. In San Antonio on April 16, 1902, policeman Pink Taylor killed Hanks when he resisted arrest. Hanks may have been as brave and daring as Butch Cassidy or the Sundance Kid, but he has never caught the imagination of the public. Most books dealing with the Wild Bunch have some mention of Hanks.

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names and addresses will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions.

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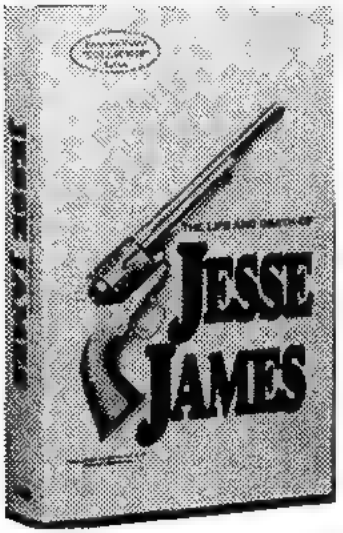

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The Driver Who Robbed His Own Coach

By GARY MEIER

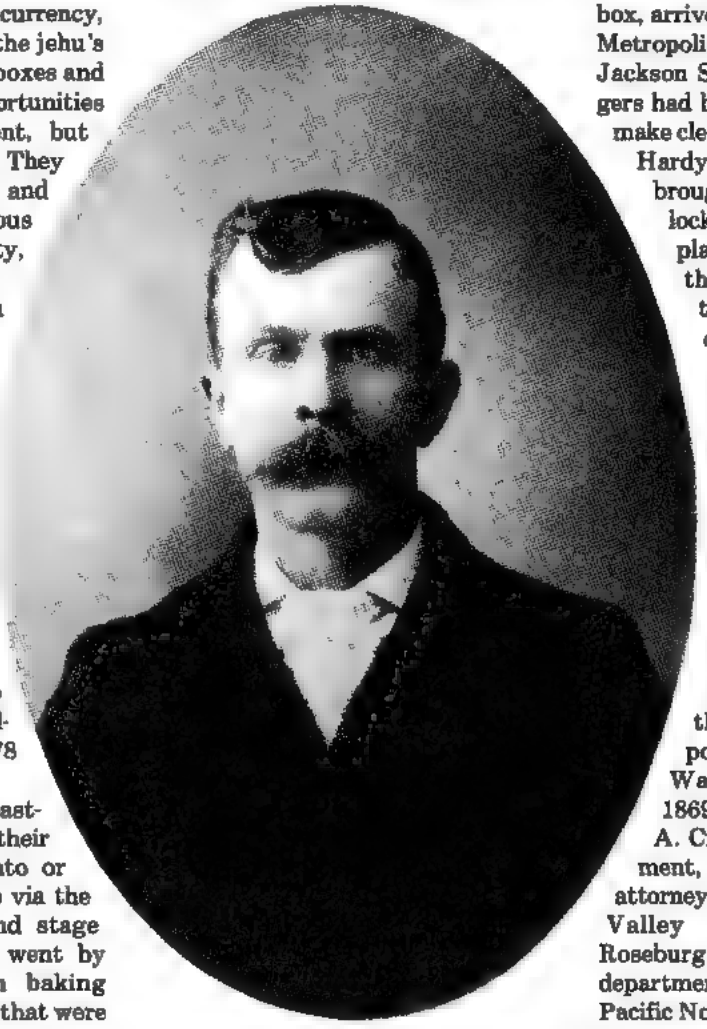
In the nineteenth-century West, stagecoach drivers were the temporary custodians of other people's wealth. Hundreds and thousands of dollars in gold coin and dust, currency, and other valuables, rode at the jehu's feet, tucked away in express boxes and registered mail pouches. Opportunities for dishonesty were frequent, but these men were not thieves. They were honest, hardworking, and loyal, performing their rigorous jobs with dignity and integrity, often at great personal risk.

But in the reality of human life every rule has exceptions, and so it was in staging. Oregon jehu Dan Smith was such an exception.

In 1874 the railroad line from Portland to Sacramento had not yet been completed. The tracks ended 200 miles south of Portland at Roseburg, Oregon. Passengers, express, and mail going farther south would be put on a stage at Roseburg to continue the trip to the railhead in Redding, California, 278 miles farther south.

Shippers of gold from eastern Oregon mines often sent their precious cargo to Sacramento or to the mint in San Francisco via the Portland-Sacramento rail and stage route. The gold sometimes went by registered mail, packed in baking powder or yeast powder cans that were locked into strong canvas pouches secured with brass padlocks. The "brass-lock pouches," as they were called, that contained gold were easily identified by postal handlers and stage drivers, for they were heavier than the pouches holding only registered mail letters and commercial paper. Just the originating and destination post offices had keys to the treasure bags; the stations along the way did not.

In October 1874, four large cannisters of gold dust from diggings near Prairie City and Canyon City, east of Oregon's Cascade Mountains, were sent down the Columbia River to the Portland post office. Case records show that the gold, valued at $5,000, was put into a brass-lock pouch in Portland on October 19 and tagged through to Sacramento, where it would be forwarded to the San Francisco mint. The next morning the gold-heavy pouch left Portland on the southbound train to Roseburg. When the train arrived at the Roseburg depot that evening, the brass-lock pouch and several regular mail bags were transferred to an express wagon for the short trip to Hardy Stanton's store and post office. The brass-lock pouch was taken into the post office, while the regular mail sacks were left out on the porch to await the stage.



Author's Collection

Stage driver Dan Smith

About twenty minutes later, a California & Oregon Stage Company coach, with veteran driver Dan Smith on the box, arrived at the post office from the Metropolitan Hotel a short distance up Jackson Street, where several passengers had boarded. The record does not make clear whether it was Postmaster Hardy Stanton or an assistant who brought out and handed up the locked registered mail bag for placement in the front boot of the stage, but in minutes all the the mail was loaded. At seven o'clock Smith's coach rattled into the night, heading south along the Umpqua River.

A week later an inquiry found its way to the desk of United States Postal Agent J.B. Underwood in Eugene City, north of Roseburg. The gold-laden brass-lock pouch sent out from Roseburg on the night of October 20 never arrived in Sacramento.

James Benson Underwood, thirty-six, had been appointed postal agent for the Oregon-Washington-Idaho district in 1869 by Postmaster General John A. Creswell. Prior to his appointment, "Ben" Underwood was an attorney in Eugene City, a Willamette Valley trading center between Roseburg and Portland. As the postal department's chief detective in the Pacific Northwest, Underwood traveled almost continuously from his headquarters, frequently visiting all parts of his jurisdiction.

When the inquiry regarding the October 20 shipment reached his desk, Ben Underwood was in eastern Oregon looking into a case. An assistant in his office notified him in a telegram, and he immediately went to Portland to get the details about the missing brass-lock pouch. He then took the train to Roseburg, where he and Douglas County Sheriff James Wright made inquiries and interviewed the stage driver, Dan Smith.

Dan Smith was thirty years old. Born in Maryland, he had arrived in Oregon in 1869. Smith had been driving stages

out of Roseburg for five years and was well thought of along the stage line. He lived modestly in Roseburg with his wife and two children.

According to Ben Underwood's later testimony, Smith denied any knowledge of the missing brass-lock pouch. His recollection was vague as to whether his stage even carried a registered mail bag on the evening of October 20. If so, he would have stowed it with the other mail bags, as usual, under the driver's seat. He said the brass-lock pouch would have stayed on the coach at the ten-minute change of horses at Oak Grove Station thirteen miles south of Roseburg, and at the Canyonville stage barn fourteen miles beyond.

The next stage stop, Levens' Station, thirteen miles south of Canyonville, was a home station and was the end of Dan Smith's run. Smith said that when he arrived at Levens' he left the mail on the stage and went in to eat and sleep. After a meal and rest break for the passengers, the stage left Levens' place and headed south with another driver, John Clark.

Dan Smith laid over at Levens' and drove the next northbound coach back up to Roseburg. He told Ben Underwood that all the mail bags picked up at Roseburg had been left with the stage when he climbed down at Levens'. Smith said he was certain the missing pouch could not have been lost or stolen on his stretch of the run, and that perhaps there had been a mistake somewhere else along the line.

In the days and weeks following Underwood's interrogation of Dan Smith, the postal agent questioned other stage drivers who had driven the coach south of Levens' Station. Jehus John Clark, Joe Beggs, and Milo Mat-

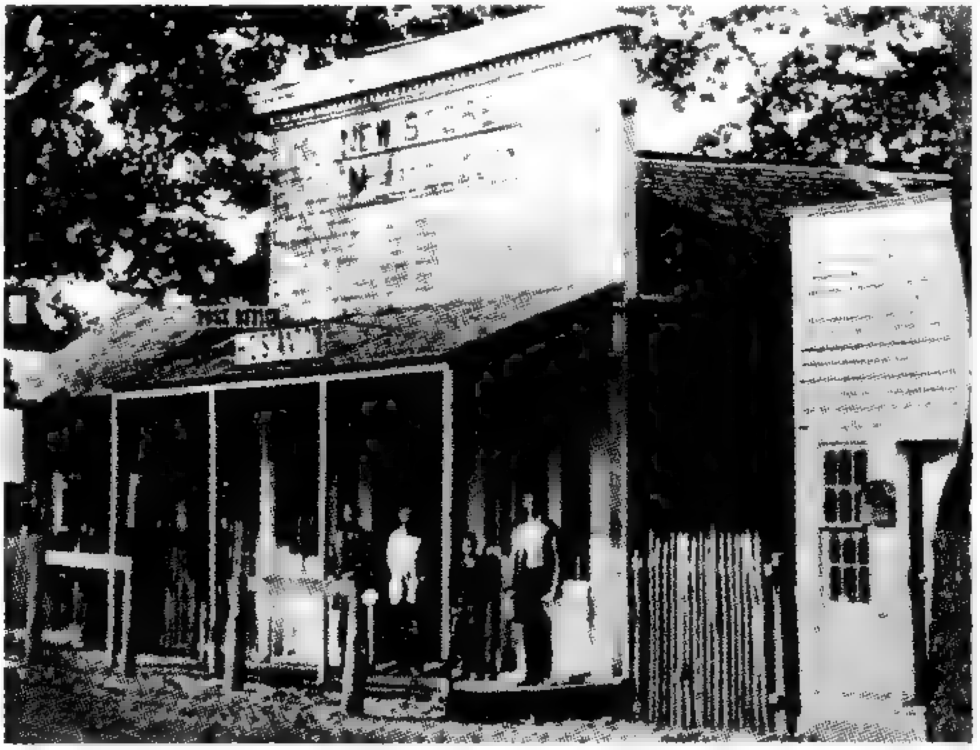
The record does not make clear whether it was Postmaster Hardy Stanton or an assistant who handed out the locked registered mail bag for placement in the front boot of the stage, but in minutes all the mail was loaded. That gold-laden brass-lock pouch sent out from Roseburg never arrived in Sacramento.

thews denied any knowledge of the missing brass-lock pouch. Inquiries were made all the way along the line to Sacramento, but nothing was learned of the pouch or the gold. It was as if some mystical force had swallowed it up. The last place the pouch had been seen for certain, according to witnesses, was at

Author's Collection

Postal agent J.B. Underwood headquartered at Roseburg's Metropolitan Hotel while on the Dan Smith case. The stage is one of several that Smith drove from Roseburg to Levens' Station.

The Roseburg post office, where stage driver Dan Smith was handed a registered mail pouch containing $5,000 in gold dust.



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Shortly after Dan Smith's return to Roseburg, he did something unusual for an innocent man: he quit his stage driving job and left for parts unknown. And he was not alone when he left town. To the shock of those who knew him, he was accompanied by Sarah Jane Montgomery, the wife of Dan's friend and fellow driver.

the Roseburg post office, where it had been handed up to stage driver Dan Smith.

From November 1874 until the summer of 1875, little progress was made in the investigation. Other matters also required Underwood's attention, but he continued questioning anyone who might have information about the lost registered mail pouch. Dan Smith, though a logical suspect, seemed an unlikely one to Underwood. Likable and outgoing, Smith appeared to be a stable family man who was known to attend church in Roseburg with his wife when his driving schedule allowed.

On July 6, 1875, Ben Underwood and Dan Smith happened to be on the same train to Portland. Underwood would later testify in court that he had practically abandoned his suspicions that Dan had anything to do with the missing gold, "...but when I saw his actions on the train I suspected him. He acted rather strange, I thought, watching me closely all the time. He appeared restless and uneasy when I had conversation with him about the robbery." In Portland, where Dan Smith was staying a couple of days on business, Underwood talked to him several times at the St. Charles Hotel. The postal agent was convinced he had his man. Underwood did not yet have any real evidence, however, and Smith continued to deny knowledge of the vanished brass-lock pouch.

Shortly after Dan Smith's return to Roseburg, however, he did something unusual for an innocent man: he quit his stage driving job and left for parts unknown. And he was not alone when he left town. To the shock of those who knew him, he was accompanied by Sarah Jane Montgomery, the wife of Dan's friend and fellow stage driver Jack Montgomery.

Ben Underwood was immediately notified of Smith's departure, but was still faced with a frustrating lack of evidence. He began to retrace his investigation of Smith, and enlisted the aid of an ex-Douglas County sheriff, John Fullerton, to help with the work. The fifty-five-year-old former lawman was a savvy detective who had built a reputation as an able thief taker as the sheriff in Roseburg from 1858 to 1862. Together, Underwood and Fullerton started requestioning everyone who saw or talked to Dan Smith on the night of October 20, 1874.

The first horse-changing point south of Roseburg was Oak Grove Station, operated by rancher George Stevenson. Stevenson had been in bed when Smith came through with the coach and had not seen him. But Wiley Cardwell, the twenty-three-year-old hostler whose job

it was to hitch fresh horses to the stage, had talked to Smith. According to Ben Underwood's later testimony, Cardwell expressed surprise at being questioned again, as he had already given his statement to the postal agent the previous October, denying any knowledge of the registered mail gold theft. He was nervous and evasive during the requestioning, so Underwood and Fullerton continued to probe.

Finally, Cardwell broke. He admitted he knew who took the gold. He had not said anything to the authorities earlier because he had been threatened with death by the culprit—Dan Smith. At the insistence of the two detectives, the frightened hostler told what he knew.

The Portland *Oregonian* and the Roseburg *Plaindealer* later published Cardwell's statement: "About the 20th of October, Dan Smith drove up to the station, got off the stage, came to me and asked if I could keep a secret. I told him I could. He said he was in a damned bad scrape and wanted me to help him out of it. I did not know what he was driving at, and I told him to tell me what kind of scrape he was in and I would help him out of it if I could do anything for him. He then went out and brought in the mail sack, and said there

Oregon Historical Society Collection

Sarah Jane Montgomery and paramour Dan Smith ran away with $5,000 in stolen gold

was $5,000 in the sack which we could get away with without any trouble. I told him I did not do that kind of business, and he had better put the sack back into the stage. He then said he was in a damned bad scrape. Told him as he had gone that far I would say nothing about it. He said if I did he would kill me."

Cardwell told Underwood and Fullerton that Dan Smith had laid the mail pouch on the floor of the stage barn and had lit a big candle for light. He then took out a large white-handled knife and cut the sack open. When the pouch had been opened, Smith took out four heavy tin cans.

"He said it was gold dust in the tin cans," Cardwell told the officers. "He tore off one of the wrappers and cut into one of the cans with his knife, and poured some of the dust out into his hand. He poured the dust back and told me to hide the sack where no living man could ever see it."

Cardwell told the detectives he had refused to hide the pouch for Smith, so the stage driver hid it himself by weighting the bag with stones and throwing it beside a big rock in the Umpqua River, which ran about 200 feet from the stage barn. On Smith's next trip through Oak Grove Station, he asked Cardwell if he had checked the big river rock in the daylight to see if the sunken mail pouch could be seen. Cardwell told him he had looked and could not see the bag in the water. Cardwell

Southern Oregon Historical Society Collection

In a 1938 photo, veteran stage driver Tom Burnett stands in front of the old Oak Grove stage barn, where Dan Smith cut open the registered mail pouch.

Oregon Historical Society Collection

Author's Photo

Left: J.B. "Ben" Underwood, the tenacious postal agent who chased Dan Smith across the United States. Right: The stolen registered mail pouch was found by lawmen beside this large rock in the Umpqua River, 200 feet from the Oak Grove stage barn.

also told Underwood and Fullerton that Smith had promised to give him five or six hundred dollars from the gold dust but had not.

After receiving the information from Wiley Cardwell, Underwood hired a couple of young men who were good swimmers to make an underwater search around the big rock. Several yards downstream from the rock, where the river ran eight feet deep, the hired boys found the purloined registered mail pouch.

Following the retrieval of the pouch, several of Dan Smith's friends came forward to tell Underwood that the rogue stage driver had confided in them that he had stolen the gold. Underwood even learned that Smith had hidden the loot for a while in an old cellar near John Rast's Roseburg brewery. On August 15, 1875, Ben Underwood wired notices to sheriffs and post offices in the region to be on the lookout for his quarry. Almost ten months after the theft, the tenacious postal agent had his evidence, and the hunt for Dan Smith was on.

Smith had quit his job with the stage company and left town with Sarah Jane Montgomery on July 10. Meanwhile, his wife and children, unaware of his decampment with Sarah Montgomery, had gone south to Shasta, California, where they planned to spend the summer looking after Mrs. Smith's ill father. Underwood inquired around Roseburg for a lead to Dan Smith's whereabouts, and he sent John Fullerton to Shasta to interview Mrs. Smith.

When Fullerton told Mrs. Smith that her husband had stolen the gold and run off with another woman, she became a fountain of information. The detective learned that the suspect was a man with a sullied past. He was wanted in San Francisco for the assault and robbery six years before of a customer in a saloon he ran.

When Fullerton told Mrs. Smith that her husband had stolen the gold and run off with another woman, she became a fountain of information. The detective learned that the suspect was a man with a sullied past. He was wanted in San Francisco for the assault and robbery six years before of a customer in a saloon he ran. He had been indicted, but had skipped out on his bond. Before California, Smith had lived in New Braunfels, Texas. His angry wife told Fullerton that "Dan Smith" was not even her husband's real name. He was born Andrew J. Harmison but had discarded his true identity after the San Francisco trouble. Mrs. "Smith" also informed Fullerton that her husband's mother lived in the town of Washington, Iowa. It was likely that he and his paramour might head there. Dan and his mother kept in touch by letter, and he had been wanting to visit her.

While Fullerton was in Shasta, Ben Underwood traced the fugitive pair from Roseburg north to Portland. There the track ran cold. Then he developed information that Smith and Sarah Jane had headed down the Columbia River on a ship bound for San Francisco. Fullerton wired the information he had learned from Mrs. Smith to Underwood in Portland, and the two detectives met and headed for San Francisco.

Their search in California was fruitless, however, so Underwood decided to follow his only lead and go to Iowa on the chance that Smith was visiting his mother. After a hot, nearly four-day train trip over Central Pacific and Union Pacific rails, the determined postal agent and his deputy reached Omaha, Nebraska. They went east another 230 miles by train and hack to the small southeastern Iowa community of Washington. There they struck Dan Smith's trail.

The outlaw stage driver was known as Andrew Harmison in the town of Washington, where he had indeed visited his mother. Mrs. Harmison refused to give the lawmen any information, but in town they met an acquaintance of An-

drew's named Mason Scott, who did help. Scott would later testify at the trial in Portland. He told Underwood and Fullerton that "Andy" Harmison and his lady friend had left town a few weeks earlier. Harmison had shown Scott some gold dust he said came from his diggings in Idaho. He told Scott he was going to the Philadelphia mint to exchange the dust for coin.

Before leaving town, Underwood called at the Washington post office and asked the postmaster to watch for any mail addressed to Mrs. Harmison that might be from her son.

Within a few days, the Oregon lawmen were in the office of the superintendent of the Philadelphia mint, James Pollock. His records showed that on July 28, a man calling himself "William Gilbert" of Idaho, but who fit the description of Smith-Harmison, had deposited gold dust in an amount approximating that taken from the brass-lock pouch in Oregon. The man had received in exchange for the dust $4,261.20 in new gold coin, all minted in 1875. A mint clerk recognized Dan Smith's photograph, which Underwood had obtained in Roseburg, as that of the depositor from Idaho.

The lawmen were on the trail, but it was a cold one for they were a month behind. Casting about for a new lead from Philadelphia, Ben Underwood sent telegrams to a number of sheriffs, post offices, and anyone he thought might have heard from or about Dan Smith and Sarah Jane Montgomery. He received no usable information until he was contacted by the Washington, Iowa, postmaster. A letter had arrived for Mrs. Harmison, postmarked in Seguin, Texas. It was the first one she had received from that town, which was near Smith's former home of New Braunfels. It was worth a look.

When Underwood and Fullerton arrived in the bustling trading center of Sequin, they had a plan. According to a later report in the Roseburg *Review*, John Fullerton had been acquainted with Dan Smith in the Roseburg area, but the last time Smith had seen him Fullerton was clean-shaven, no beard or moustache. Since hiring on with Underwood, however, the former sheriff had allowed his beard and hair to grow. By the time the lawmen reached Seguin, Fullerton had a two-month's growth and was of such a grizzled aspect that, the paper announced, "...his own wife would not have known him." Maybe neither would Dan Smith.

While Underwood kept a low profile in town, Fullerton registered as a land buyer at the primary Seguin hostelry, the Magnolia Hotel, a longtime stage stop and social center. Before long he spotted Dan Smith and Sarah Jane Montgomery walking into the dining room for breakfast one morning. Neither of them paid any attention to, as the *Review* item put it, "the little old dusty man, who seemed so deeply engaged in reading his papers and quietly sipping his coffee." The disguise worked.

Fullerton contacted Underwood, and together they arrested the stunned former stage driver and Mrs. Montgomery in their hotel room. Though Smith's gun was close at hand he offered no resistance. In a buckskin bag in Smith's and Sarah Jane's possession,

Los Nogales Museum Collection

Seguin, Texas, where detectives Ben Underwood and John Fullerton captured outlaw stage driver Dan Smith.

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Underwood and Fullerton found a large number of gleaming ten- and twenty-dollar gold coins, all minted in 1875 at the Philadelphia mint. The purse also contained silver coins and $450 in currency. Also, Sarah had a new gold watch and chain, as did Smith.

The hunt was over, a victory for the travel-weary lawmen. Smith and Sarah Jane were taken back to Oregon, under careful watch, by way of St. Louis, Omaha, and San Francisco. The party arrived in Portland aboard the steamer *John L. Stephens* on September 30, 1875, almost a year after the theft of the brass-lock pouch at Oak Grove Station.

Andrew J. Harmison, alias Dan Smith, went to trial in December. Much of the court record of the case still exists in the National Archives, and according to reports in the Portland press, it was a lively affair. Defense attorney James Fay proposed to the jury that the gold-laden mail pouch had been stolen off the porch of the Rosebug post office and was never aboard Dan Smith's stage. He also tried to implicate others as the chief culprits, including Sarah Jane's husband, Jack Montgomery. He brought in fourteen witnesses to testify on behalf of his client.

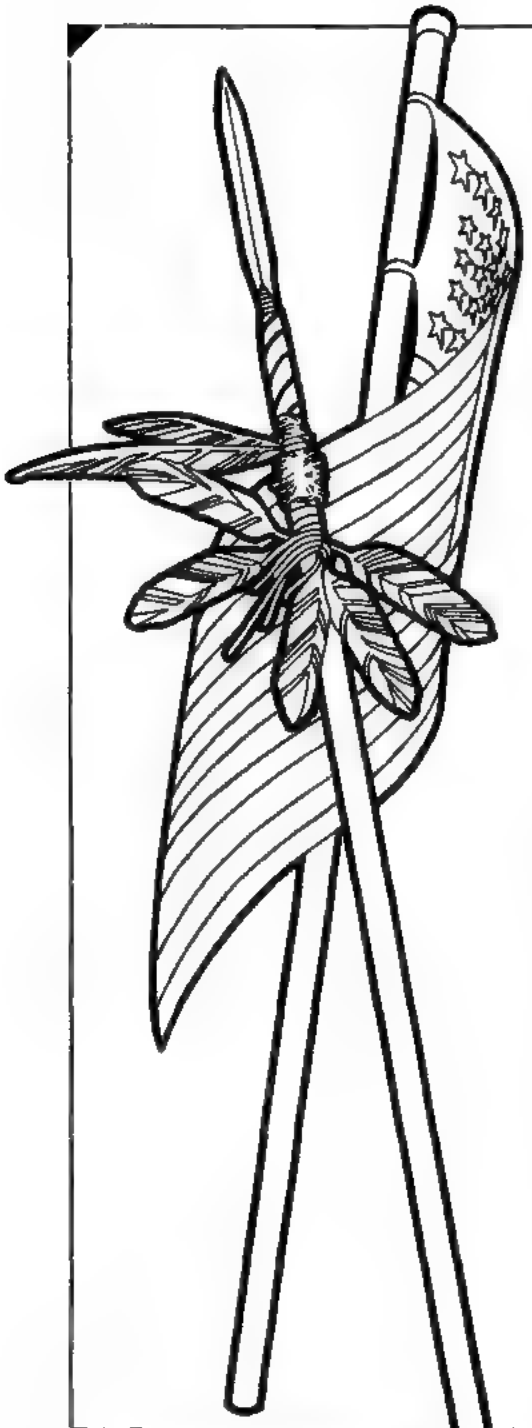
The stormy prosecutor, United States Attorney Rufus Mallory, called thirty-two witnesses, and his voice boomed as he examined them. The trial lasted seven days.

Four days before Christmas, the jury found Harmison-Smith guilty of embezzlement of the United States mail. In a subsequent trial, Sarah Jane Montgomery was found not guilty.

Judge Matthew P. Deady, when sentencing Andrew Harmison, emphasized that the registered mail gold dust had been in the stage driver's care for safe delivery, and that his action was a betrayal of trust, making it more the criminal. Harmison was given eight years at hard labor in the penitentiary at Salem, Oregon. Loss of respect, loss of family, and the wearing of convict number 843 for many hard years were the "prizes" won that night at the Oak Grove stage barn when Dan Smith robbed his own coach.

Library of Congress Collection

Dan Smith was spotted in the dining room, lower left, of the historic Magnolia Hotel in Seguin, Texas. This photo was taken during the hotel's restoration in 1936.



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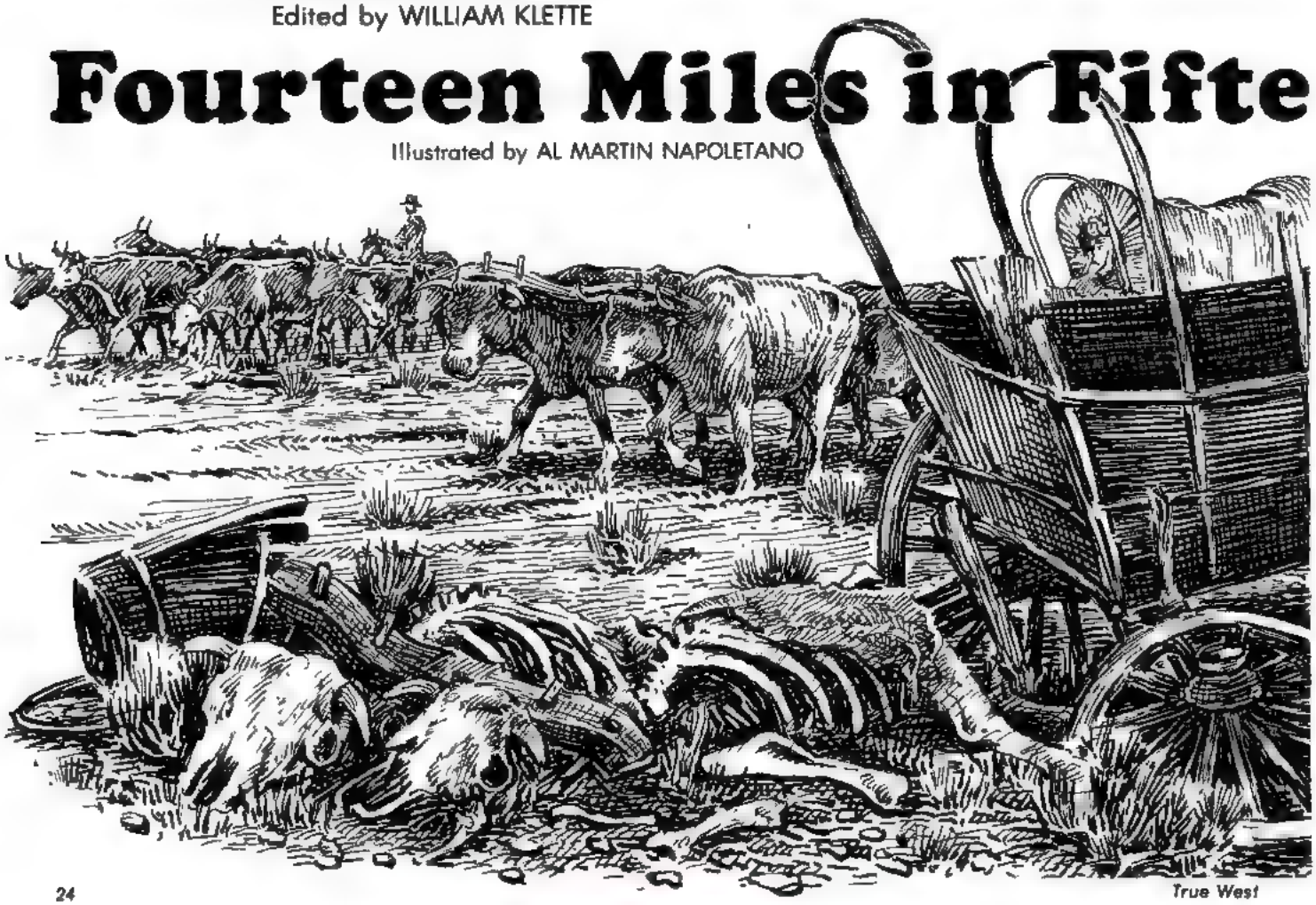
By ALEXANDER McSWAIN
Edited by WILLIAM KLETTE

Fourteen Miles in Fifte

Illustrated by AL MARTIN NAPOLETANO



Although I was nineteen at the time, I can truthfully say my life never really began until I started across the plains for California. I was a strong and wiry lad, a good horseman, and I could rope. My father, who had just returned to our home in Mexico, Missouri, was making preparations for a return to the Pacific Coast, and he was taking me along.

The year before, he and my oldest brother had joined a party of gold seekers headed west. Arriving in the San Joaquin Valley of California, he saw a great potential there for ranching, and leaving my brother to take up on a piece of land along the Merced River, he headed home. Once back in Missouri, he spent the remainder of the winter of 1853–54, putting together a small herd of cattle for the return trip.

We crossed the Missouri River at St. Joseph, on May 24, 1854. Our party consisted of sixteen men and one woman in all; my father, myself, and fourteen men who had been picked at random. One of these was married and brought his wife with him, she being the only woman in the party. Two men were from Ohio, four were Irishmen whom we picked up along the Missouri River, and others were boys from our own neighborhood.

We had 600 head of as fine cattle as could be found in that day. We had sixteen head of horses and mules and four covered wagons, each with a three or four hitch of oxen.

Early on the morning of the second day after crossing the Missouri we saw our first Indian, an old chief of the Kansas tribe, who came into our camp and demanded pay for crossing through his country. My father treated him kindly, giving him sugar and coffee, which seemed to satisfy him.

At that time there were two main routes to the Pacific, the northern and the southern. Along both men had congregated in great numbers. Some were engaged in trapping or trading, but others were nothing but outlaws.

We took the northern route, more commonly known as the California-Oregon Trail, which headed northwest from St. Joseph, followed the Platte River to Fort Laramie, and then crossed the northern edge of the Rockies. Sometimes we were able to follow the Platte, but at other times the track would lead away from water and across dry plains broken only by deep washes.

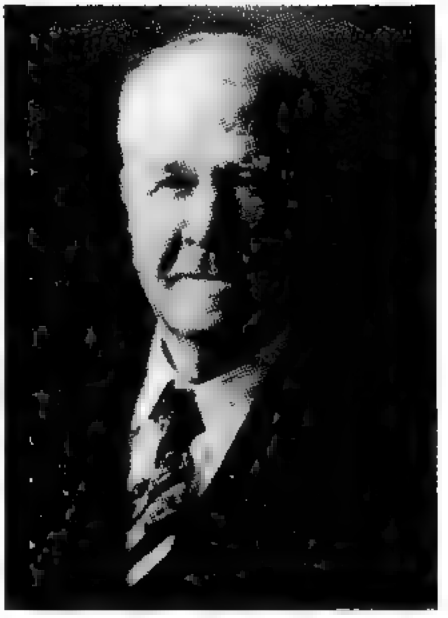
***Editor's Note:** In 1929, ninety-four-year-old Alexander McSwain, an early-day California rancher and a former lawman, sat down and dictated the story of his life to his lawyer and close friend, Ernest Klette, later a California superior court judge. One portion of McSwain's heretofore unpublished account, which was only recently found among the late judge's personal papers, tells how in 1854 McSwain and his father attempted to bring a herd of cattle across the plains from Missouri to California. Although they arrived in California ragged and on foot and with only a small part of their herd remaining, their trip must be counted among the first cattle drives across the western deserts.*

Editing of this portion of the journal has been minor, with only spelling corrections and the omission of a few redundant personal recollections.—W.K.

The trail was easy to follow, well marked by the graves of hundreds of travelers who had died the previous years of cholera, hardships, or who had been killed by Indians. Many of these shallow graves had been dug open, either by wolves or Indians, and human bones could be seen scattered on the surface of the ground. Remains of broken wagons, abandoned farming implements, and household goods were intermixed with the bleached bones of cattle.

My father, having already made the trip across the plains once each way, had experience which enabled us to avoid many of the more common hardships of the journey. He knew where to find fuel and water, and most important, where to find feed for the cattle. He also knew the best season of travel and that we must cross the Sierras before the autumn snows came so we would not meet the same fate that befell the Donner party a few years before.

Like most of the travelers headed west in those days, we had a guidebook



Author's Photo

Alexander McSwain, as he looked in 1929. A California rancher and deputy sheriff, McSwain and his father drove a herd of cattle from Missouri to California in 1854.

which we studied until we all knew it by heart. It was a great help to those traveling for the first time, telling where water and wood could be found, and supposedly where the danger of attack by Indians was greatest.

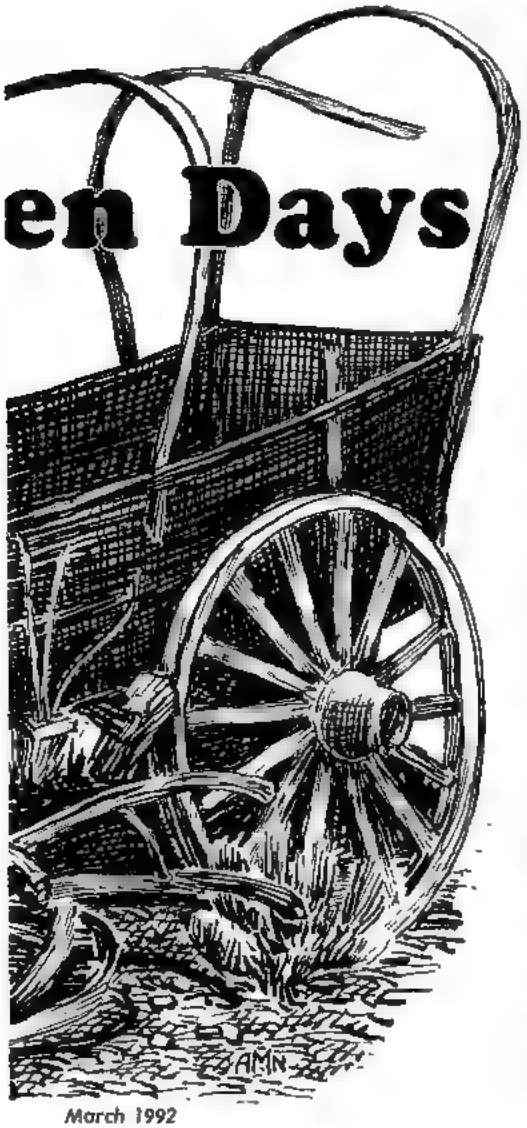
The trip went smoothly enough until we reached the Big Blue River. That night we experienced our first thunder storm, one of many to come that first month. Lightning flashed continually and thunder was one continuous roar. The rain came down in torrents, and in a few moments, we and all our belongings were drenched. Sometimes these storms would last for hours while at other times they ended as quickly as they began and the sun would shine brightly. But if a storm came at night it meant we had to remain in our wet clothes until the sun came out the following morning.

And there was always a danger of a stampede. If at night there was even a slight chance for a storm, we doubled our guard, and many a night I've ridden for hours, drenched to the skin. The horses, too, were spooked by lightning and several times one or two would break away and head for home. It seems strange, but this homing instinct on the part of a horse is always there, even if home is a thousand miles away.

One time a four-year-old broke from its picket and headed for home. Next morning my father sent me to follow its trail. I followed until I found where it had left the main track and entered some timber along the river. As it was too late for me to search further, I turned back. Just before sundown I saw some horsemen running buffalo, a small herd of which I could see off in the distance. They were Indians. I did my best to keep out of sight, as a few minutes before I had seen a large rattlesnake in the road and had stopped to kill it, but found my pistol wouldn't fire. It was an old cap and ball, and for protection I might as well have had a toothpick.

IN THOSE early days most travelers had little fear of Indians, thinking of them as either beggars or thieves. What few we had seen during the first part of our journey either sat by the roadside hoping for handouts, or else tried to demand tribute for crossing their territory. But a few days later our first trouble with them came about. We had stopped to make camp at dusk and were just fixing to put out our night guard when a band of Indians dashed among the cattle at full gallop, shouting in a terrible manner and scattering the herd down the trail for miles. In the excitement our horses and mules went too. In the poor light we fired at the Indians but did no harm, and they rode away as rapidly as they came.

The next morning we started out on foot to gather up our animals, not knowing how far they had been driven or if we would ever see any of them again. After several miles of walking I caught a horse that had gotten tangled up with its rope. About two miles down the trail I picked up the first of the herd and gradually found the rest scattered along a watercourse. There were fresh Indian sign about, but I didn't see any. They had seemed content to scatter our animals and would then later, no doubt,



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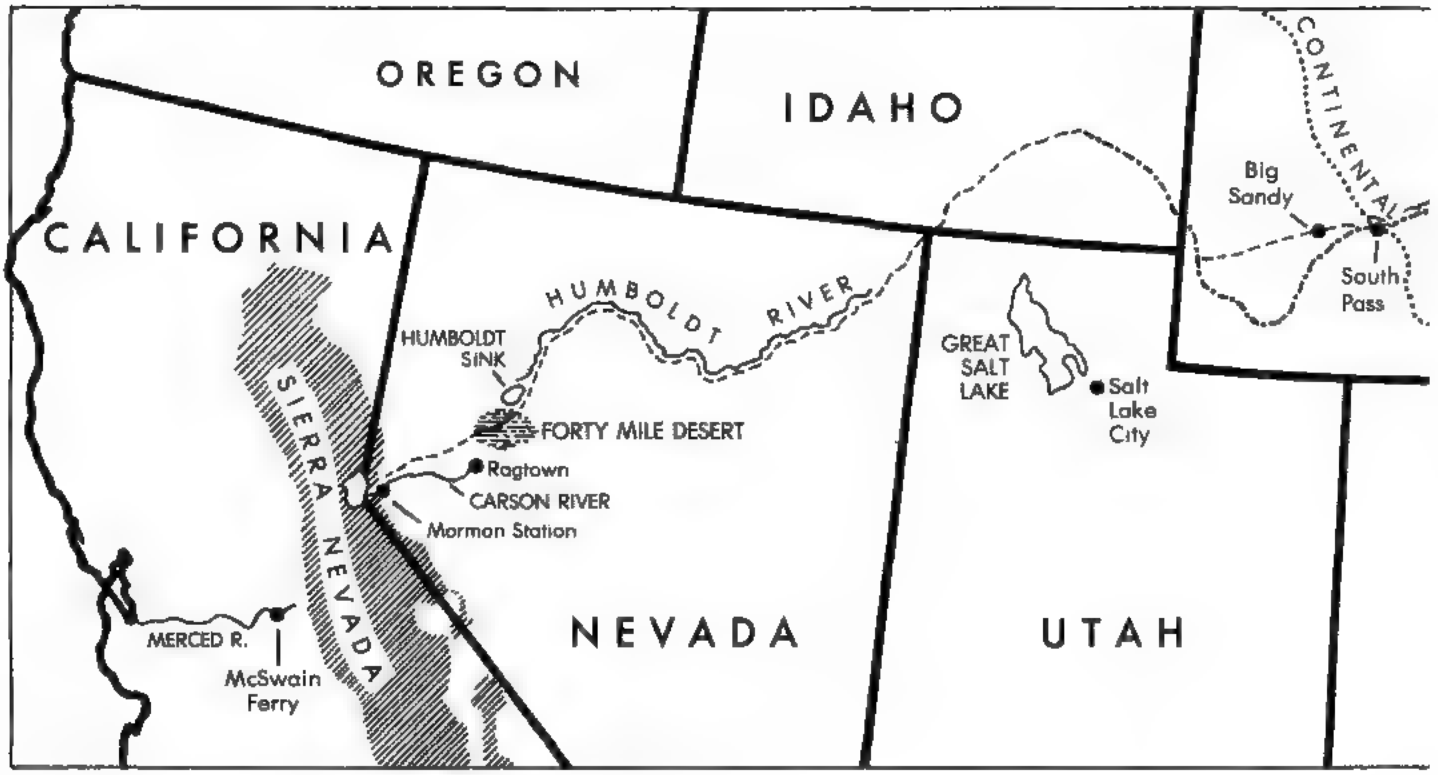


catch the horses and kill the cattle as they needed them.

I got behind and started to drive them back towards our camp when I saw a horseman coming towards me. I thought it was an Indian and I had no gun, but it was my father who had also caught a horse and followed my tracks until he found me with the cattle. We took a tally and found we had not lost a single head.

For the next few days everything went very smooth except for the road that crossed the Divide. We were following the Sweetwater on a track that was rocky and narrow, and it was with a great deal of difficulty that we were able to get our wagons across. Finally we made South Pass, where we made camp.

Our guidebook had said to look out for rattlesnakes. It informed us that the first emigrants that camped here had killed 500 of them so to be careful. But in fact, rattlesnakes were numerous across the entire distance from the Missouri River west, and we had already killed many.

Our next stopping place was at Big Sandy, just to the west of South Pass. We did not put out a guard, and during the night our horses were again run off by Indians. Or so we thought. Early next morning my father and I struck out on foot to find them. We hadn't gone far when we saw a man whom we believed to be an Indian herding a bunch of about fifty horses, among which we could see our own. Since we were alone, I told my father to go back for help and I would stay and watch. Soon after, the man started to drive the herd away and I ran down the road in an attempt to head them off. I raised my rifle and shot at the man, the bullet striking under his horse, but he dashed away in the direction in which the horses went.

I went back to where we had left the herd and, with my father and eight of our crew, went to the camp of some whiskey traders that we had passed the day before and not far from where I today had lost sight of the horses. There were six men lolling around a couple of tents, and they were a hard looking bunch. We were satisfied that they were renegades who, under the guise of trading, were preying upon travelers by stealing their horses and robbing them. But even an inoffensive emigrant becomes a desperate man when a thousand miles out on the plains his horses are stolen and he is left on foot. At that moment, without our horses and stranded, we were as desperate men as they and it would have required little provocation to have caused us to take human life.

As we entered their camp they showed considerable uneasiness as if expecting trouble. They denied any responsibility for the missing horses and we got little satisfaction from our questions.

We continued to follow the tracks of the horses, and late that afternoon they came in sight. I managed to catch a mule and with it helped my father catch his horse. By nightfall we had gathered up all our animals, as well as a few extra that were running loose with our little herd.

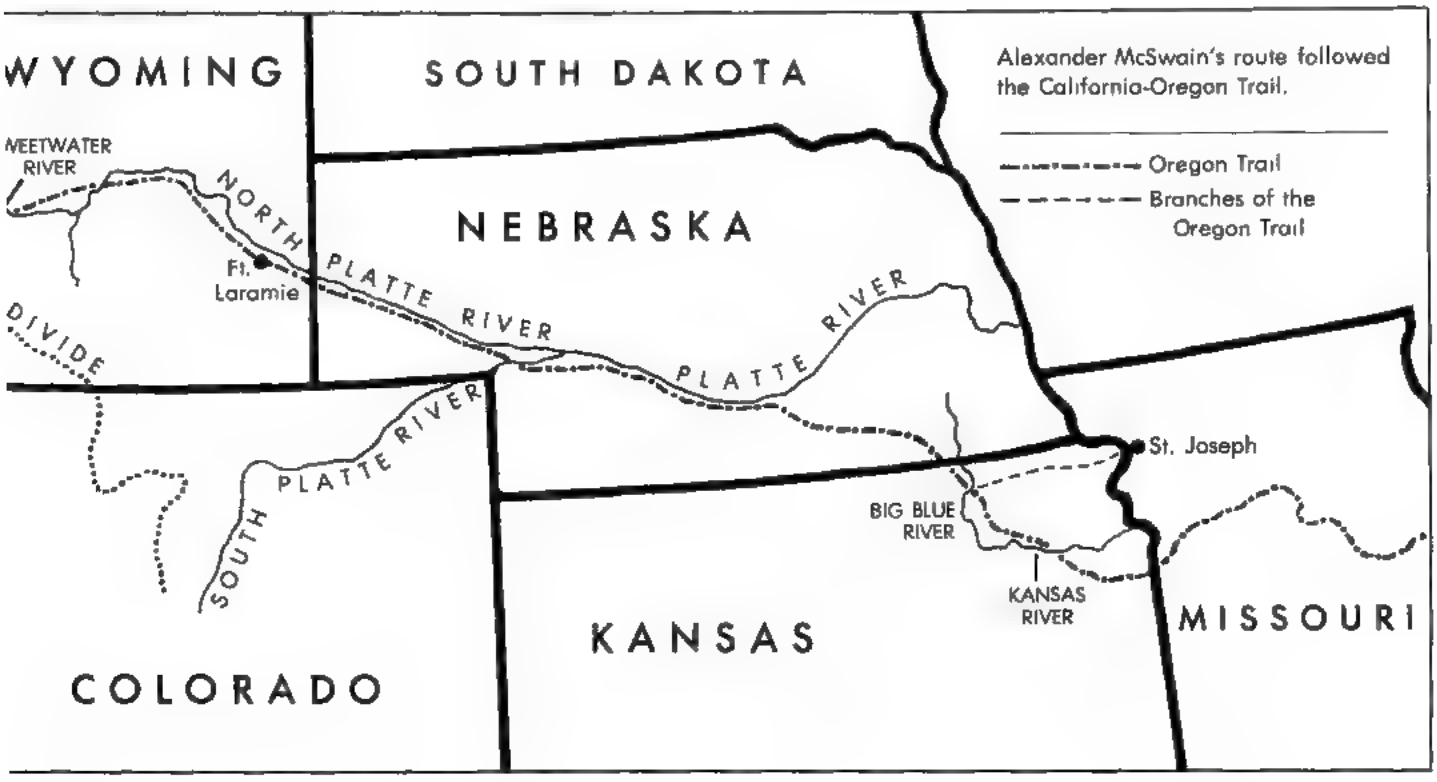
The next morning, back with our cattle and all our horses, we were passed by a Saint Louis company, with a number of wagons going at a trot. My father remarked that they could pass us now, but they'll never reach California with that kind of driving.

This proved to be true, for when we came to the Sierra Nevada some months later, we came upon one man of that party with his wife, driving a team that was nothing but skin and bones. The remainder of their party had fallen by the wayside, most at Salt Lake City where their teams had given out.

Usually things went fairly smooth, but it was always a strain on everyone. As the boys used to sing:

And it's fourteen long miles in fifteen days,
If we don't stop for the cattle to graze.
Over the mountains and over the hill,
And always something to give you a thrill.

We always are ready both day and night,
We're ready to run or ready to fight.



Not very pleasant to a peaceful mind,
Or to make a heart that was very kind.

Traveling at the rate of a mile a day,
Going to the Pacific far away.
With a feeling that when we reach its shore,
We'll make it our home and roam no more.

Soon after leaving our camp where the renegades tried to run off our horses, we came to what was called the Sublette Cutoff. I wanted to go south through Salt Lake City, but my father refused. My oldest brother had belonged to the Missouri State Militia that had some years before run the Mormons out of Missouri. It was said that the Mormon Church had the names of all those that had taken part in that affair, and my father was afraid that if we tried to take our herd through Salt Lake City, we would be questioned and would never reach California.

From here we had few problems until we reached the Humboldt River in what is now eastern Nevada. On this day I was behind, alone, driving some cattle that were footsore. I was walking, as I had to go slow and was using a stick to prod the cattle along. I was probably about two miles behind our main herd when it went out of sight behind a hill. The road ran through some sagebrush, and as I passed along I could see a party of forty or fifty Paiutes about a hundred yards off the trail watching me. I was scared, but there was little use to run.

Just then two Indians came out of the brush ahead of me walking in my direction. One was carrying a string of fish. As they met the cattle I was driving, they turned off the road and let them pass. There was one cow in the bunch that was rather fat. When I came opposite the two, one pointed to the cow and, holding up the fish, said:

"Fish, cow?"

"No," I said.

He ran to drive the cow out and I ran after him. I let him have my stick two or three times across his back. He had a long pouch over his shoulder made of heavy skin in which he was carrying a number of arrows. These protected him or I might have knocked him down. The blows were sufficient to make him change his mind, and he ran back and joined his companion.

I went after the cattle and got them going as fast as possible. When I was about thirty yards away, he started after me, but his partner ran and caught him and then motioned for me to go on. I didn't need a second invitation.

I kept looking over my shoulder to make sure he didn't shoot me in the back. When I was off about sixty yards they turned him loose and he was the worse licked dog you ever saw. He stood with his head down while the others danced around him shouting and laughing. The Indian who had protected me hollered and motioned for me to keep going, which I did and I soon passed out of sight.

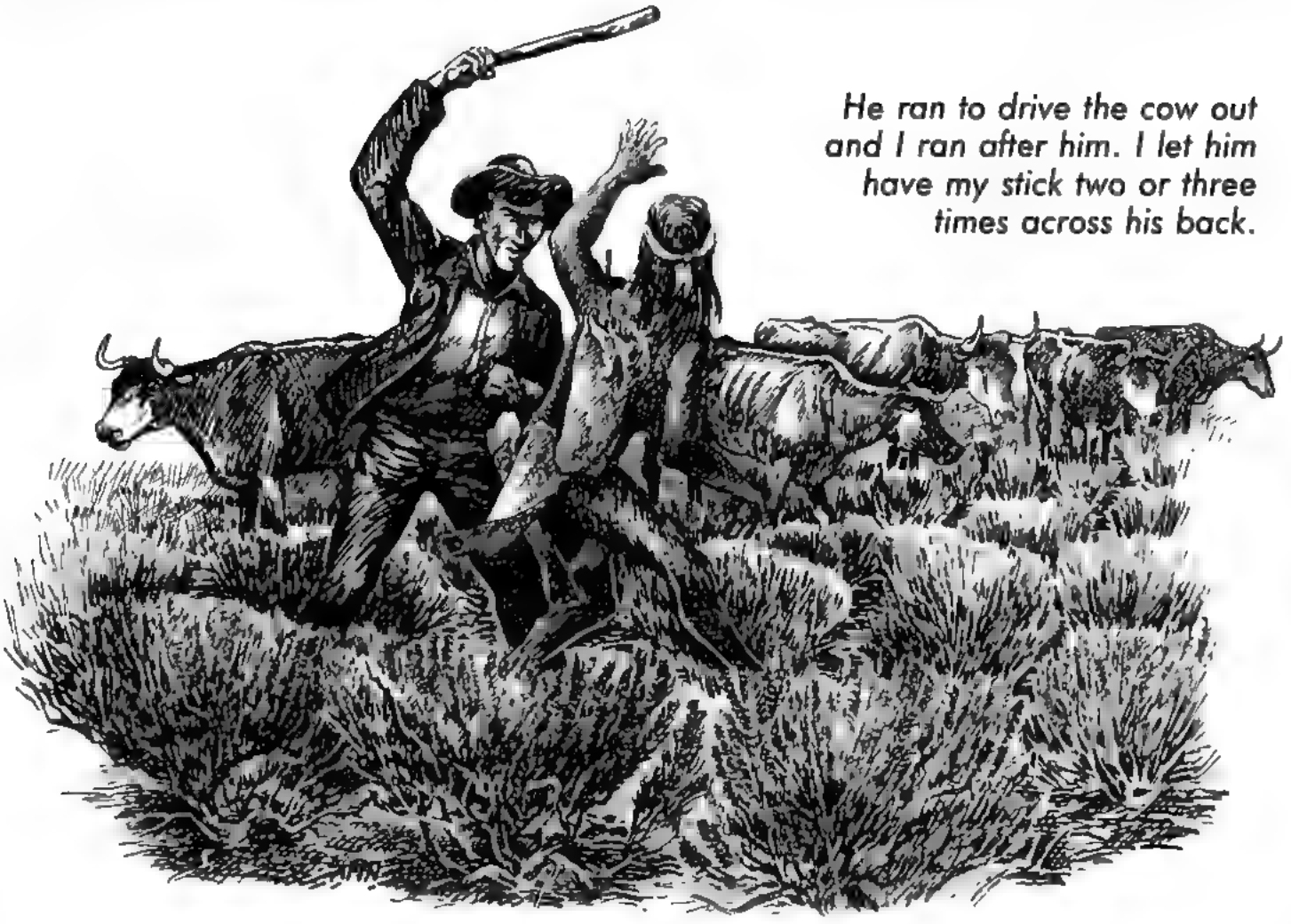
The Humboldt River where we camped that night made a wide, horseshoe-like bend with forty or fifty acres of good grass in the middle. My father had us put the stock in there.

"We'll all get a good night's rest," He said. "We'll sleep at the neck so the stock can't get out and they won't cross the river."

With no guard out we all went to sleep, and evidently slept a little too soundly, for when we awoke in the morning, all our horses were gone. The Indians had come, muffled the bell on our bell mare, and had led them out of our camp while we slept. We took up their trail on foot and followed for several miles, but as they had a four or five hour start, we never saw any of our animals again. At that time, sixteen head of horses and mules in San Francisco would have brought a large sum of money, perhaps as much as eight or ten thousand dollars.

But the value of our horses was not our main loss. We were without animals to herd or drive our cattle, who were now thin and footsore and required a great deal of pushing and prodding to move.

I at first blamed my father for not putting out a guard, but as I thought it over I decided that if someone had



He ran to drive the cow out and I ran after him. I let him have my stick two or three times across his back.

been on watch that night we might have all been killed. The Indians had come to steal, but were prepared for a fight, and when they found us all sleeping they decided that since all they wanted was the horses, they could take them without waking us. Had someone been awake we would have had a fight and they, being more numerous, would in all probability have killed us all.

About a week later near this same place, Indians attacked a train that was traveling not far behind us. They killed men, women and children, and burned their wagons and everything they had. These were probably the same Indians who stole our horses and who had become bold with their success.

Often at night we would see a fire start up and be answered by other fires off on the mountains, sometimes as many as half a dozen. We didn't know what this meant except that they might be signaling to one another that there was a large immigrant train passing. Whether they meant well or ill, I don't know, but we were never bothered except on the two occasions I have told.

Since we now had no horses we were obliged to walk, and it made our travel much more difficult to drive the 600 head of cattle on foot. We called it going fourteen miles in fifteen days. We followed the Humboldt until it emptied into a lake, a brackish body of water called the Sink of the Humboldt. Here where the river ended we would turn south towards the Carson River and the little community of Ragtown.

BUT TO GET there we had to cross the Forty Mile Desert, a barren stretch with no feed and little water. And what water there was, was so heavily impregnated with alkali as to be unfit to drink. It was here that we lost most of our herd after having brought them at great trouble so many miles.

It was true that while crossing the plains we had lost an animal or two, but now they died by the score. Even though we had rested and watered them for a few days at a meadow near the Sink, they were in poor shape. They would gather round the alkali water holes and they were so thirsty that we, on foot, could not drive them away in spite of anything we would try and do. Even after reaching the Carson River, I got up one morning and found twenty-five head laying dead. From then on, until we got well into the mountains, we lost some every night and throughout the day. After they took a few sips of alkali water there was almost no remedy. The only thing we knew of was fatty bacon which, when forced down their throats, would give relief. We had a great deal of bacon when we started across the desert and saved a great many head before we ran out.

When we arrived at Ragtown, a small collection of whiskey tents and traders camped among the trees along the Carson River, all the men that were with us with the exception of a young boy named Yancy, announced they were quitting our party as soon as we reached the Sierra, which were less than a hundred miles away. My father was furious and told them to get their traps out of the wagons and leave right then. I tried to calm him down and to wait until at least we had made a start across the mountains, as we needed every man we had. But he was one of those men who had to have their own way every time, and he had the temper to go with it.

The men swore they would get even with us as they picked up their blan-

kets, but nothing more happened. They walked back from our camp to where a man had a tent and was selling whiskey to all passersby. They got roaring drunk, and from time to time one would come back and say they were all coming back later to give us trouble, but they never did.

We were now ready for the trip across the Sierra. The season was getting late, and a delay might prove disastrous, as early snow storms could come at any time. We were shorthanded, but now had two horses which my father had traded oxen for at Ragtown. Our few remaining cattle were thin from the hardships of crossing the desert and were hard to manage. We still had the young boy with us from our original party, and near Mormon Station we picked up a man by the name of John Rhodes. He had a wife with him, whom we also took along. They were two of those unfortunate ones who had lost everything crossing the desert and who had become stranded by the roadside. Mrs. Rhodes was expecting a child, and partly through pity for her and partly because of her own desperate need of help, my father hired Rhodes and made a place in one of the wagons for her to ride.

This left four of us to handle the wagons and the stock. We coupled two wagons together, hitched our oxen to them, and Rhodes drove one set while I drove the other. My father and the boy drove the cattle. In this way we crossed the few remaining miles to the mountains and slowly crept up their eastern slopes. The work was now tremendous, with four of us doing what had previously been done by twelve.

After crossing over the summit, Mrs. Rhodes became extremely ill. It was early in the morning and I hooked up Rhodes' yoke of oxen and told him to hurry ahead with his wife. They did, and we followed more slowly.

Along the middle of the first afternoon after crossing the summit, I saw a man on horseback riding towards us. When we got closer I saw he was my brother, whom I had not seen since he left home for California two years before. He had left the ranch on the Merced River where he was living and had come to help us for the remainder of the journey.

Before we could get out of the mountains there came the first big storm of the season. It covered the road with snow to a considerable depth and made travel difficult. The road was slushy, the cattle almost unmanageable, and we were cold, wet, and miserable. We pushed on as fast as we could and finally reached the plains.

A few days later we reached our destination on the Merced River where my brother had located. Our ranch headquarters would be known as McSwain Ferry, and still later it was the site of the McSwain Bridge. We arrived there on November 19, 1854, the trip having taken us 178 days. Of the original party there were only three of us left. We arrived with none of our original horses and mules and with only 141 head of the 600 cattle we had started with. But we made it.

A band of Indians dashed among the cattle at full gallop, shouting in a terrible manner and scattering the herd down the trail for miles.

Doctor Finfrock

Practicing Medicine on the Plains

By MURRAY L. CARROLL

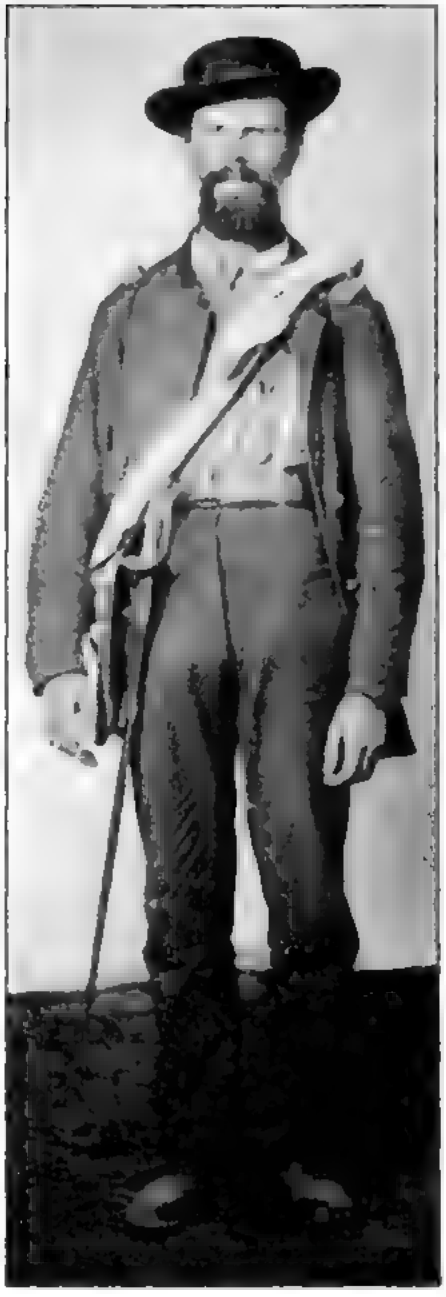
Without the few pioneer doctors who settled in the early western towns, life on the frontier would have been even more precarious than it was. Injury from violence or accident and illness were the silent companions of everyone who ventured west. Shootings, knifings, frostbite, ranching accidents, timbering accidents all took a regular toll. Railroads, such as the Union Pacific in Wyoming, were a major cause of serious injury. Railroaders often were crushed between cars, caught between trains and snow sheds, thrown from the tops of moving trains, scalded by exploding locomotive boilers, or injured in the frequent collisions and derailments. Time after time communities were caught in the grip of major epidemics of smallpox, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, cholera, or diphtheria, all of which exacted a heavy toll, particularly among the weak, the elderly, and children.

In 1880, all of Wyoming Territory had only thirty physicians and surgeons. Of those, some had little or no formal training since there were no licensing laws to set standards; others were heavily addicted to drugs or alcohol and were probably more of a hazard to their patients than a help. Some who were qualified sought more lucrative or less demanding professions—Dr. J.H. Hayford founded and edited the *Laramie Daily Sentinel*, and Dr. Hiram Latham turned to writing glib propaganda for the Union Pacific's land sales promotions.

One of the pioneer physicians who began his medical practice in the frontier West was Dr. John H. Finfrock. He arrived with the army during the Civil War when what was to become Wyoming was still part of Utah, Dakota, and Nebraska territories. He continued to practice in the area for thirty years. He not only was an outstanding physician and surgeon who provided his patients with excellent medical care, but he played an active and important part in the civic and cultural life of the region as well.

John H. Finfrock was born December 9, 1836, in Columbiana, Ohio, to an upper-middle class family that included doctors, lawyers, and merchants. He attended the Columbiana public schools, Richmond College of Ohio, and the University of Michigan. He studied medicine with two uncles, Dr. William Blecker and Dr. A. Blecker, and in 1861 he graduated from Cincinnati Medical Hospital with highest honors.

Right after graduating, Finfrock enlisted in the Union Army as a hospital steward. Almost immediately he was commissioned a captain in command of Company F, Sixty-fourth Ohio Volunteer Infantry, part of General Philip Sheridan's division in the Department of the Cumberland. After fighting in the Battle of Murfreesboro in late December 1862 and early January 1863, Finfrock was advised by the surgeon general of Ohio to resign his commission because of recurring ill health.



American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Captain J.H. Finfrock when he was in command of Company F, Sixty-fourth Ohio Infantry, 1861–1863.

On June 22, 1862, he had married Anna Catherine McCullogh in Mansfield, Ohio. He and his bride now went to Cincinnati, where he took another course in medicine starting in March and ending in May 1863. His health restored, and desiring to return to the army, Finfrock took his medical examination boards in Columbus, Ohio, in early July and was commissioned a captain, first assistant surgeon, on July 20, 1863. He was assigned to Colonel William O. Collins' Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, one battalion of which was at Camp Dennison, Ohio, ready to leave for the West, where it would join the balance of the regiment in protecting the stations along the Oregon and Overland trails. On October 19, 1863, Captain Finfrock reported as surgeon at Fort Halleck on the Overland Trail in the shadow of Elk Mountain.

In the summer of 1862, increasing Indian troubles had caused the Overland Stage Line to move from the route up the North Platte, the Sweetwater, and across South Pass to a more southerly route by way of Julesburg, Denver, the Laramie Plains, and Bridger Pass. A telegraph line was built along the new trail and freight and emigrant traffic also moved to this route. Fort Halleck was established July 20, 1862, under Major John O'Ferrall, Eleventh Ohio Cavalry, to protect the stage and telegraph lines. The change in route did not solve the problem. While the Sioux and Cheyenne harassed the northern route, the Utes kept the southern road under almost constant attack.

Besides his duties caring for the sick and wounded of the Eleventh Ohio, the post surgeon cared for the emigrants, civilian scouts, freighters, and local residents. He was also responsible for recording the number of emigrants,

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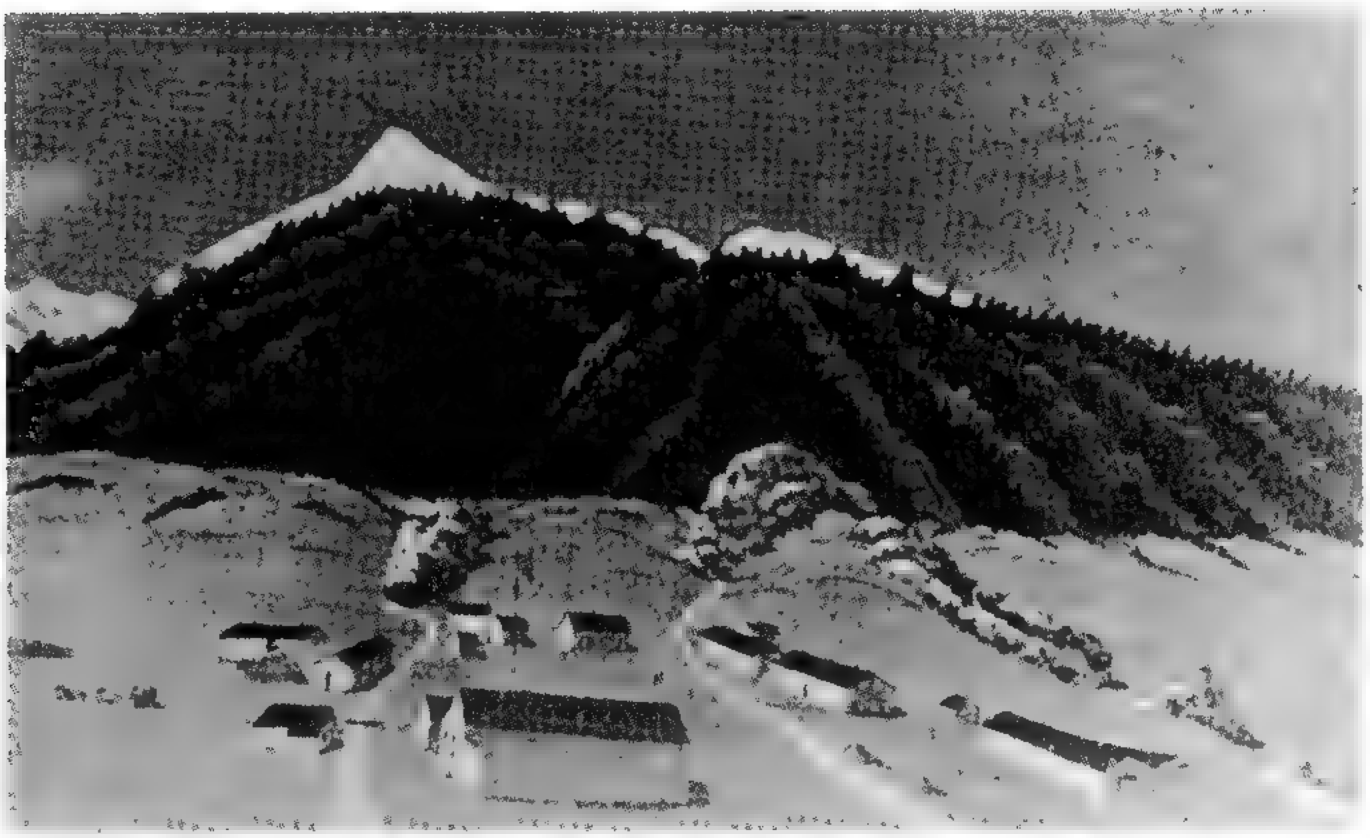

Wyoming State Museum Collection

Fort Halleck, Dakota Territory, circa 1863. Elk Mountain is in the background.

wagons, and livestock passing the post, and for consolidating small parties into groups big enough to protect themselves. He served as post meteorologist as well.

Frostbite and frozen limbs were major problems at Fort Halleck. Both men and animals suffered from the brutal cold. Finfrock recorded the loss of four horses and three mules "over freezing and hard driving" on the trip from Fort Laramie to Fort Halleck. In late December 1863 and early January 1864, he recorded temperatures of thirty and thirty-five degrees below zero.

Scurvy also was prevalent. In April, Private Andrew J. Rawlston died of it, and many other troopers were seriously ill. As soon as wild onions made their first appearance, Finfrock added them to the soldiers' diet. The commissary officer and an escort were also sent to Denver to try to get fresh vegetables.

Besides his military duties, Finfrock made house calls. On April 27, he left for Big Laramie Station, sixty-six miles east, to treat a stage company employee named Thompson who had been wounded in an Indian raid. Along the way, he extracted an emigrant's tooth for one dollar; prescribed for an emigrant's wife for ten dollars; took care of a man with erysipelas at Rock Creek; treated two sick emigrants and the child of the station keeper at Rock Creek, for which he collected twenty dollars; and treated a man for a sore foot at the Little Laramie station. He arrived back at Fort Halleck on May 1.

In 1880, all of Wyoming Territory had only thirty physicians and surgeons. Of those, some had little or no formal training since there were no licensing laws to set standards; others were heavily addicted to drugs or alcohol and were probably more of a hazard to their patients than a help.

On June 17, Dr. Finfrock went to Julesburg by way of Fort Laramie to escort Anna Catherine, who was joining him at Fort Halleck. In July, he and a Dr. Force repaired the dislocated shoulder of a stage driver using chloroform for the anesthetic.

In August, he lost one emigrant whose chest was crushed in a runaway. Another with a wagon train sixty miles from Fort Halleck accidentally shot himself when he dropped his rifle during an Indian scare. The bullet tore his arm from the elbow to the shoulder, and the wound bled profusely. A volunteer rode to Ft. Halleck, got an ambulance, and returned to the train. Dr. Finfrock amputated the arm as soon as the patient arrived at the post. Still, the man died an hour after the operation.

The same month, Finfrock also lost a premature baby. The following month, though, he delivered two healthy babies. In spite of Indian threats, the area along the trail was becoming more settled. In October, he treated a boy living on one of the new ranches near the Platte River for a mule kick that left a hole about the size of a half-dollar in his forehead. Finfrock enlarged the hole and elevated the bone away from the brain. Finfrock's prognosis was pessimistic, but the boy recovered.

Sporadically through the summer of 1864 Indians attacked along the entire trail, and Dr. Finfrock had difficulty getting ambulances to evacuate the wounded to Fort Laramie.

A noose was placed around Jennings' neck, and the other end of the rope tied to the end of the sweep. Asked if he had any final words, he said he was going to hell a-whooping and hurrah for Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy. When the men holding down the sweep let go, Jennings' body shot up in the air.

On September 25, a brutal killing occurred at the post. A black civilian servant named Asa was accused of raping a twelve-year-old white girl. The troops of D Company lynched him. He was tarred, feathered, set on fire, and finally skinned alive by Ed Lewis, the hospital steward, who then nailed the skin to the side of the hospital. Dr. Finfrock recorded in his diary that he dissected the body.

A second lynching took place May 21, 1865. On May 13 at Cooper's Creek Station, Bob Jennings killed Hod Russell, a resident of Fort Halleck. Jennings wounded another man by the name of Olds. Soldiers from the fort were afraid to try to arrest Jennings. Since Jennings was on friendly terms with the local Indians, the post commander hired a party of Indians whom Jennings knew to accompany hunter William Comstock. Disguised as an Indian himself, Comstock finally arrested Jennings.

Fort Halleck used a device similar to a well-sweep to keep its meat supply safe from predators. The weighted end was so heavy it took two or three men to raise it. A noose was placed around Jennings' neck, and the other end of the rope tied to the end of the sweep. Asked if he had any final words, he said he was going to hell a-whooping and hurrah for Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy. When the men holding down the sweep let go, Jennings' body shot up in the air the length of the rope, breaking his neck. When the only witnesses to Russell's murder, Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Fisk, arrived from Cooper's Creek Station, the executed Jennings was tried and found guilty.

On October 16, 1865, Finfrock's first child, William Edmund, was born at Fort Halleck. Three weeks later, Anna and the baby returned to Mansfield, Ohio. The first leg of the adventurous journey was with a military escort to Denver. From Denver to Fort Leavenworth was by stagecoach, then on to Mansfield by train.

Fort Halleck was abandoned July 4, 1866, and its garrison was moved to Fort Sanders, just south of the future site of Laramie, Wyoming. Dr. Finfrock continued to serve as post surgeon at Fort Sanders until the Union Pacific Railroad arrived in 1868. He resigned from the army, entered private practice in Laramie, and served as surgeon for the railroad. The first railroad hospital in Laramie, under Doctors Finfrock and Gregory, was a tent on Second Street, conveniently located in the middle of the saloons, gambling dens, and dance halls. In 1869, a permanent hospital was built in the railroad yards. In 1870, the railroad closed the hospital and Dr. Finfrock undertook its operation as a private enterprise. In a notice in the *Laramie Daily Sentinel*, he stated that "he [would] also attend all calls between Cheyenne and Green River from Railroad Employees or Citizens." In January 1871, Dr. Finfrock performed an amputation on a man whose leg had been badly injured nine months previously when he was run over by a train. He used an advanced technique known as disarticulation. It involved separat-

Laramie Plains Museum Collection

Union Pacific Hospital, Laramie, Wyoming Territory, circa 1870. Dr. Finfrock operated the hospital for the railroad, later as a private hospital.

Fort Sanders, Wyoming Ter-

LICENSED TO
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCT

ing the leg at the joint rather than sawing off the bone, then tying off the nerves and blood vessels.

In 1876 the hospital was taken over by the Sisters of Charity. Shortly after the Sisters took over, they and Dr. Finfrock had to deal with a major disaster. In 1874 the Union Pacific had opened a steel rolling mill in Laramie. It employed between 150 and 200 men per shift. On March 24, 1876, a boiler at the mill exploded, killing four men outright, hospitalizing nine with serious burns, and injuring several others less seriously. Despite the efforts of Dr. Finfrock and the nursing Sisters, seven of the nine hospitalized died.

The same year, a serious epidemic broke out in Laramie, causing a major disagreement between Dr. Finfrock and the other doctors in town. It was the community's first outbreak of smallpox. Except for Dr. Finfrock, all the doctors initially diagnosed the problem as scarlet fever. Smallpox required that the town authorities establish a pest house and isolate all those taken ill. The city fathers wanted to avoid that expense, and the other doctors did not want to face the problem of isolating their patients. The post surgeon at Fort Sanders complained about the civil authorities' lack of control, and an order forbade soldiers from going to town during the epidemic. Finfrock's diagnosis was correct, and his early proper treatment saved several of his patients' lives. The *Laramie Daily Sentinel* of July 17, 1876, carried a thank-you card to the doctor from his patients.

Wyoming State Museum

John H. Finfrock family, circa 1880. Left to right, Albert, Dr. Finfrock, William Edmund, Anna Catherine, and Henry.

When Dr. Finfrock finally got city authorities to open a pest house, it was located a mile east of town. When the pest house was ready, Finfrock went to the livery stable for a team and wagon to move his patients. No livery stable would rent him a team and wagon. On his way past the railroad station, he noticed a perfectly good pushcart belonging to the Union Pacific. He got the loan of it, and one at a time loaded his patients on it and pushed them out to the pest house. When he was through, he went to thank the agent and return the cart. The frightened agent told him in no uncertain terms to get out and take the cart with him.

In 1883, the Sisters of Charity opened St. Joseph's Hospital, a modern, fifty-bed facility with two surgeries, one of which was especially equipped for amputations. It was staffed by five professional nursing Sisters. The hospital drew patients from all over the territory. Dr. Finfrock repeated the disarticulation operation on a "Mr. Stamy" of Fort Fetterman. Another surgeon had amputated Stamy's leg five inches below the knee after his horse fell with him. The stump did not heal and was very painful. When Dr. Finfrock opened the stump, he found a piece of dead bone, a bundle of silk lying loose in the stump, and a ligature tied around the main nerve. He cleaned up the debris and completed the operation. Three days later, assisted by four other surgeons, he successfully completed a radical mastectomy on a Mrs. P.A. Steinhoff, removing a cancerous tumor weighing

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ritory. The hospital is the long building behind the row of troops.

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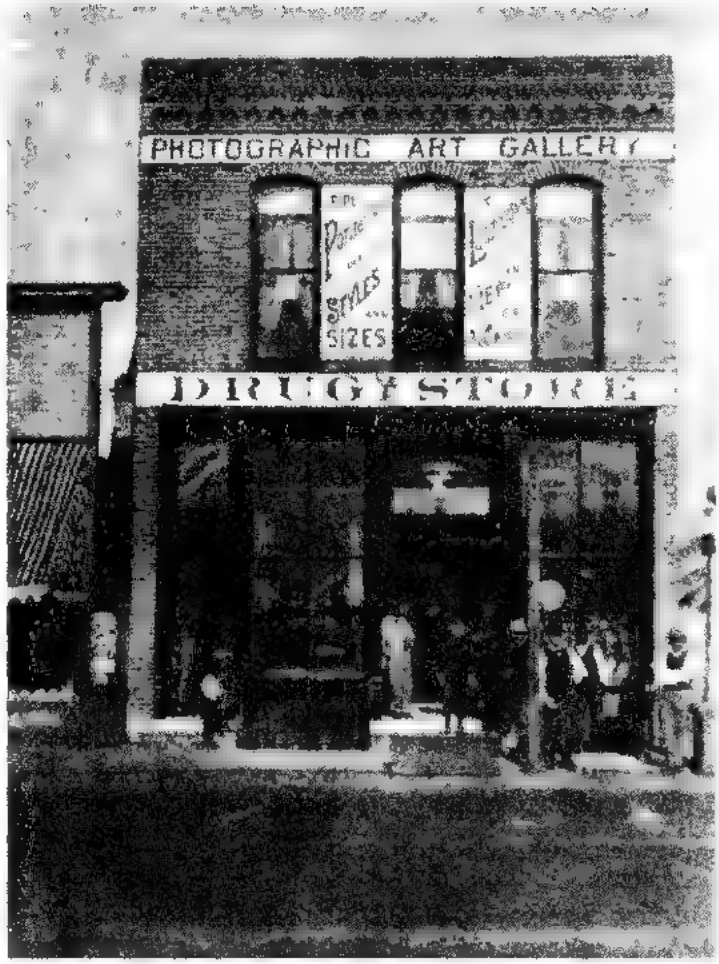

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Left: Advertisement for Dr. Finfrock's drugstore from an 1885 Laramie newspaper. Right: Dr. Finfrock's drugstore and office, circa 1885, Laramie, Wyoming Territory.

Finfrock pressed for the completion of a central sewer system throughout the town so that privies and cesspools could be replaced. He kept steady pressure on the city fathers to use prisoners to round up the pigs that rooted through the garbage and trash around town and to clean up the streets, water ditches, and alleys.

over three pounds. Mrs. Steinhoff fully recovered.

Besides his surgical skills, Dr. Finfrock also was a vocal agitator for community sanitation. In 1876, the Union Pacific completed a water main from the springs east of Laramie to its rolling mills and repair shops. Dr. Finfrock worked diligently for the formation of water companies to complete branch mains down the side streets of the town so that a supply of pure water would be available for each household. He also pressed for the completion of a central sewer system throughout the town so that privies and cesspools could be replaced. He kept steady pressure on the city fathers to use prisoners to round up the pigs that rooted through the garbage and trash around town and to clean up the streets, water ditches, and alleys. He was a strong, and vocal, advocate of vaccination for smallpox and inoculation for diphtheria, particularly for the town's children.

Dr. Finfrock found it necessary to dispense drugs from the time he first entered private practice. In the early 1870s, he opened a drugstore with a man named Thobro who was a trained chemist and pharmacist. In 1883, Thobro went to New Mexico for two years and Finfrock closed the store. When Thobro came back to Laramie in 1885, they opened the Eagle Pharmacy. In early 1886, they built a new, two-story brick building to house the pharmacy and Dr. Finfrock's offices. The second floor was fitted out as a photographic studio. The *Laramie Daily Sentinel* described it as "a credit to its owners, and another large stone in the edifice of Laramie's prosperity."

John Finfrock's contributions to the community and the territory were not limited to his medical skills. He also had a strong sense of civic and social duty. Despite a pressing professional schedule, at various times he filled many public offices. He was appointed Albany County treasurer and probate judge when the county was still part of Dakota Territory; he was a member of the first Laramie city council; a member and president of the Albany County school board; county superintendent of schools; territorial penitentiary commissioner, president of the commission, and prison surgeon; mayor of Laramie; member and chairman of the board of county commissioners; and member and president of the first board of regents of the University of Wyoming. In his role as president of the university board of regents, Dr. Finfrock worked successfully to have the university designated as the territorial land-grant school, thus getting federal funding assistance that still continues.

Besides his civic activities, he played an active part in the community's

BOOKMART

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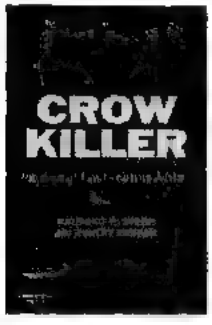
Paper, $15.95



314—CROW KILLER: THE SAGA OF LIVER-EATING JOHNSON. By Raymond W. Thorp & Robert Bunker. A mountain man among mountain men, Jeremiah Johnson was one of the toughest characters on the western frontier. He vowed vengeance on the entire Crow nation for the deaths of his Indian wife and unborn child. He tracked Crow warriors singly and in groups, killing 300 of them, scalping them, and eating their livers. "A robust story, almost incredible"—*New York Times.* Indiana University Press. **Paper, $8.95**

278—JESSE CHISHOLM: AMBASSADOR OF THE PLAINS. By Stan Hoig. Chisholm played many roles: trailblazer, scout, trader, and, most importantly, diplomat between the Plains Indians and the U.S. government. Using a wealth of source materials, Hoig provides a portrait of Chisholm that in many ways surpasses the myths surrounding him. This is a long-overdue biography. University Press of Colorado.
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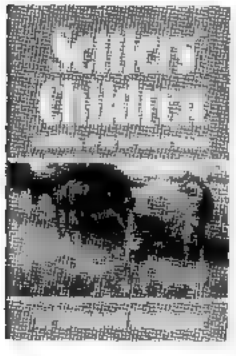

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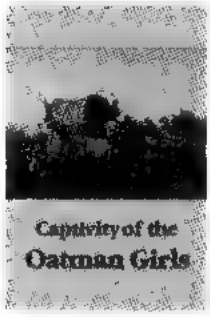

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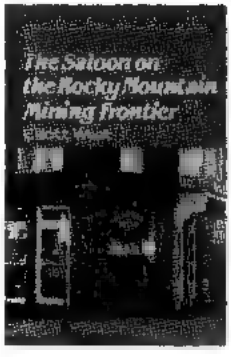

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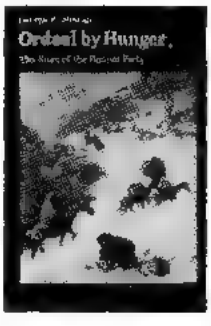

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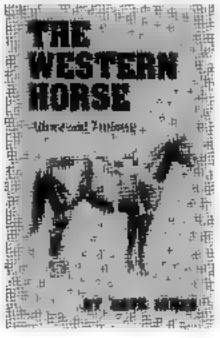

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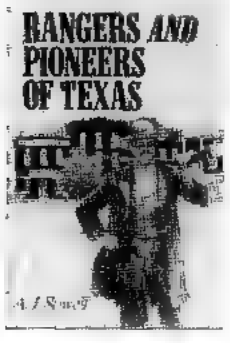

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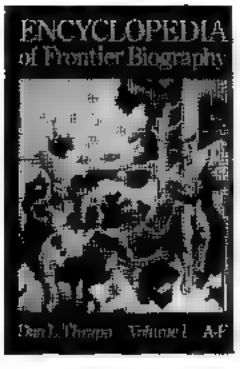

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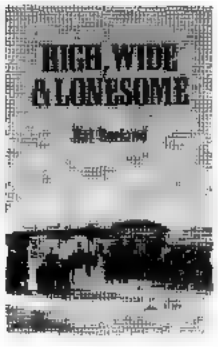

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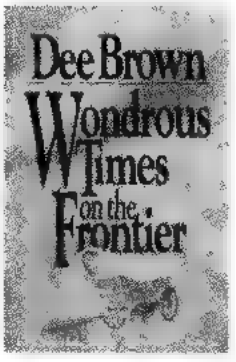

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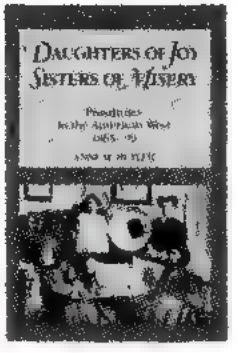

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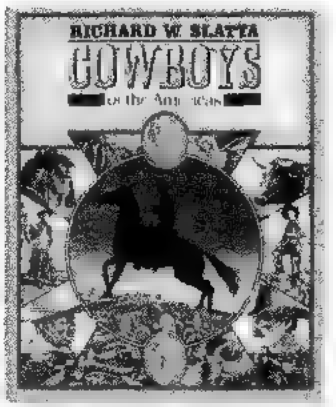

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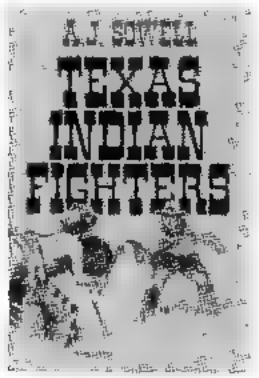

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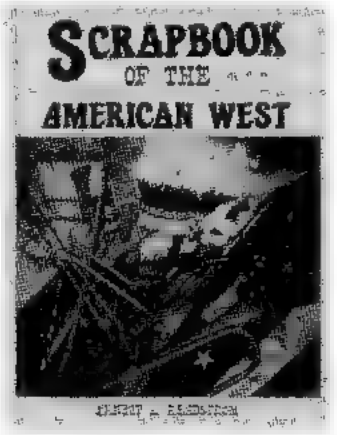

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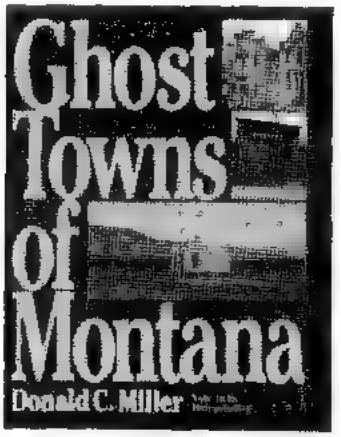

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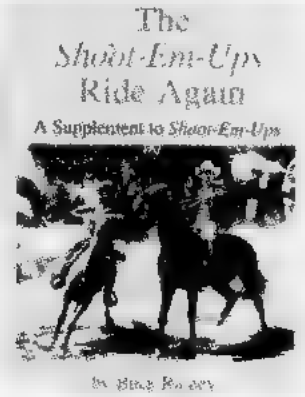

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cultural and religious life. He was one of the founders of the Laramie Presbyterian Church and served on the board of trustees from 1869 until 1890. He served as president, treasurer, and librarian of the Wyoming Literary and Library Association, one of the first libraries organized in the territory. In its initial years, the library's books were kept in Dr. Finfrock's office. He was an avid gardener, and is credited with introducing roses and lilacs to Laramie. The *Laramie Daily Sentinel* for July 12, 1873, carried a story on the fine strawberries he raised, and in a September issue of the same year, the editor commented on the splendid tomatoes the doctor brought to the newspaper office from his garden. When time permitted, he fished with his sons in the nearby streams, and took hunting trips with his friends.

Dr. Finfrock was also noted for his sense of humor. One of his sons inherited his vivid dark-red hair. One day when the boy appeared at the barber shop for a haircut, he was carrying a spool of thread in his hand. When the barber asked him what it was for, the boy said that his father told him to tell the barber to be sure to tie each hair before he cut it so that he would not bleed to death. After a less than successful hunting trip, he was quoted in the newspaper as having suggested to the rest of the hunting party that they put up signs in the area where they had been shooting so that no prospectors would mistake it for a potential lead mine.

Besides their son, William Edmund, born at Fort Halleck, the Finfrocks had three other children. Their second child, Henry, born in 1871, died at the age of eighteen. Their only daughter, Mary Catherine, was born in January 1873 and died in September of that year. Their last child was Albert, born in 1875. Mrs. Finfrock died in 1887, at the age of forty-nine, after a long illness.

In 1893, Dr. Finfrock's health began to fail, and he decided to move to a lower altitude. After a refresher course in surgery at Polyclinic Hospital in New York City, he moved to Boise, Idaho. Six weeks after his arrival in Boise, on November 11, 1893, he was found dead in his bed in the hotel where he was living. The news of his death brought deep grief to the citizens of Laramie. His body was returned to Laramie for burial beside Anna Catherine and his two children. Despite bitter cold weather, his funeral was described as the largest in the city's history. The *Laramie Weekly Sentinel* closed its obituary of the doctor with a quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet speaks of his late father:

> He was a man, take him for all in all.
> [We] shall not look upon his like again.

Wyoming State Museum Collection

St. Joseph's Hospital, Laramie, Wyoming Territory, circa 1880.

What Long Shot at Adob

By LEON DAY

"The white men had guns of all kinds. The Indians going back the same direction they came, quite a number were assembled on a little knoll some 1400 yards distance, thinking themselves safe. . . . These hunters with their sharp shooting rifles, did their best to dislodge these Indians. Finally one fell. . . ."

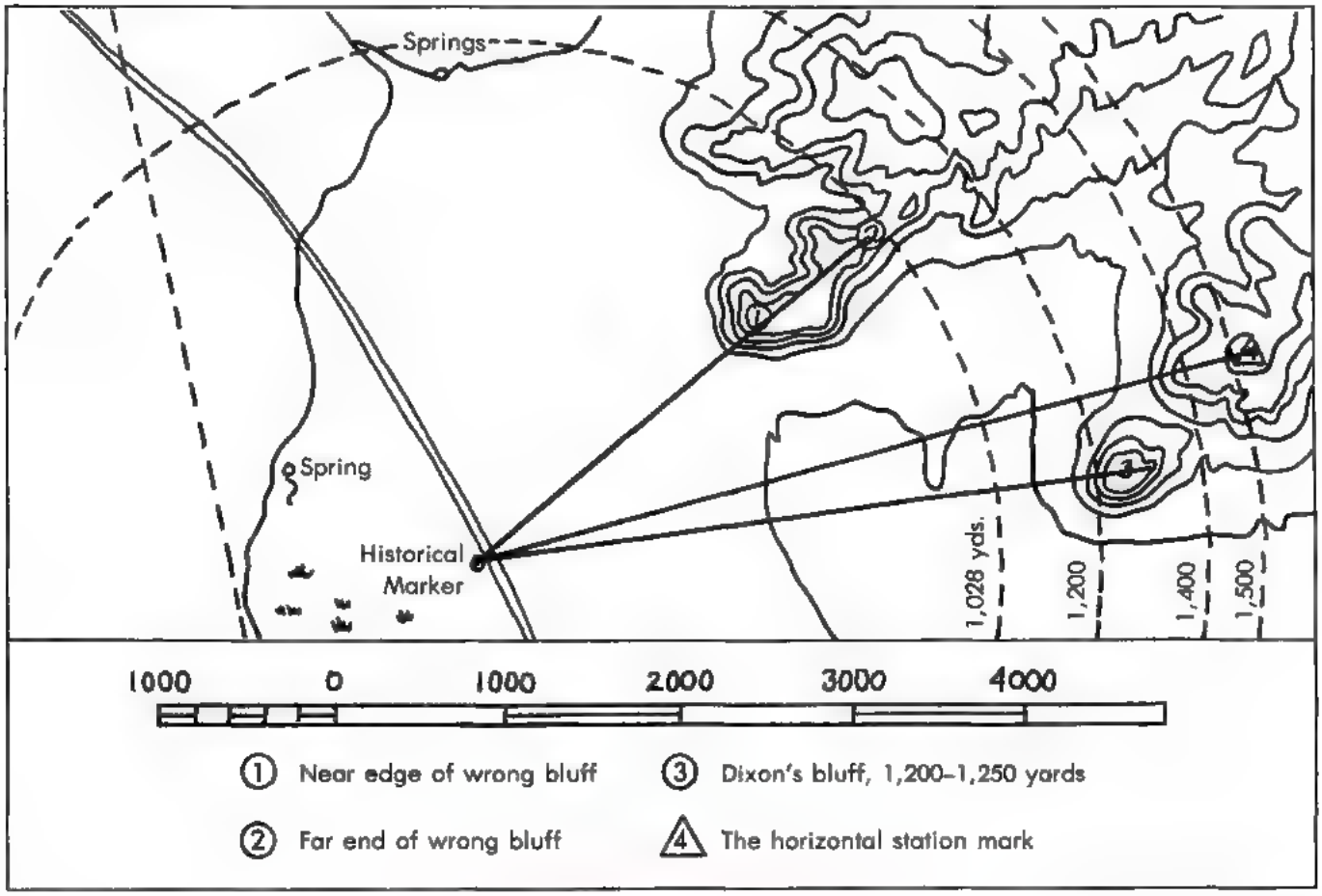
About dawn Saturday, June 27, 1874, 200 to 1,000 Kiowa, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Arapaho warriors (their actual strength is uncertain) attacked twenty-eight men and one woman in a buffalo hunters' camp at Adobe Walls, three miles north of the Canadian River in the Texas Panhandle. The fight produced a famous feat of marksmanship when Billy Dixon reportedly shot an Indian at a distance of nearly a mile. But Dixon's "long shot" was not as long as legend and professional historians have maintained.

Quanah Parker, aided by medicine man Ishatai, led the Indian force. Ishatai had seen in visions how warriors should paint themselves to ward off white men's bullets. However, when the Indians made their first attack, the hunters mounted a successful defense, convincing the warriors that Ishatai's magic was a fraud. The Indians lost from thirty to 115 dead (again, estimates vary), the hunters only three.

The Indians did not press their attack the next day; they were worried about the failure of Ishatai's medicine and had evidence that the whites perhaps had some magic of their own. About 2:00 p.m. on the first day of the fight, a slug hit Parker a glancing blow in the back. While the shot may have been the result of poor Indian marksmanship, it caused some to believe the whites had magic bullets that could circle a target and hit it from the rear. Later a bullet killed Ishatai's war pony on the reverse slope of a ridge where the Indians thought they were safe.

Of course there was no magic involved. While no one was trying to hit Ishatai's horse, many of the hunters were firing at targets on the ridge. Their early center-fire cartridges, which had high arced trajectories and were deadly (but not accurate) up to 2,400 yards, would certainly endanger anyone on the reverse side of the slope; any slug that just cleared the crest would give effi-

Contour Lines at Each 20 Feet of Elevation



e Walls?

cient grazing fire all the way down the opposite side. Forty years later, World War I machine-gunners learned to do this on purpose to hinder supply lines from thousands of yards away. At Adobe Walls the hunters achieved the same effect by accident.

The defenders at Adobe Walls thought no range too great. The closest bluff to the camp was 700 yards. As the hunters were used to shooting single buffalo at 500 to 600 yards, they did not consider a group target (in which any hit would be satisfactory) at 700 yards a waste of time. Most of the men at Adobe Walls were Civil War veterans and all had great confidence in their weapons and marksmanship.

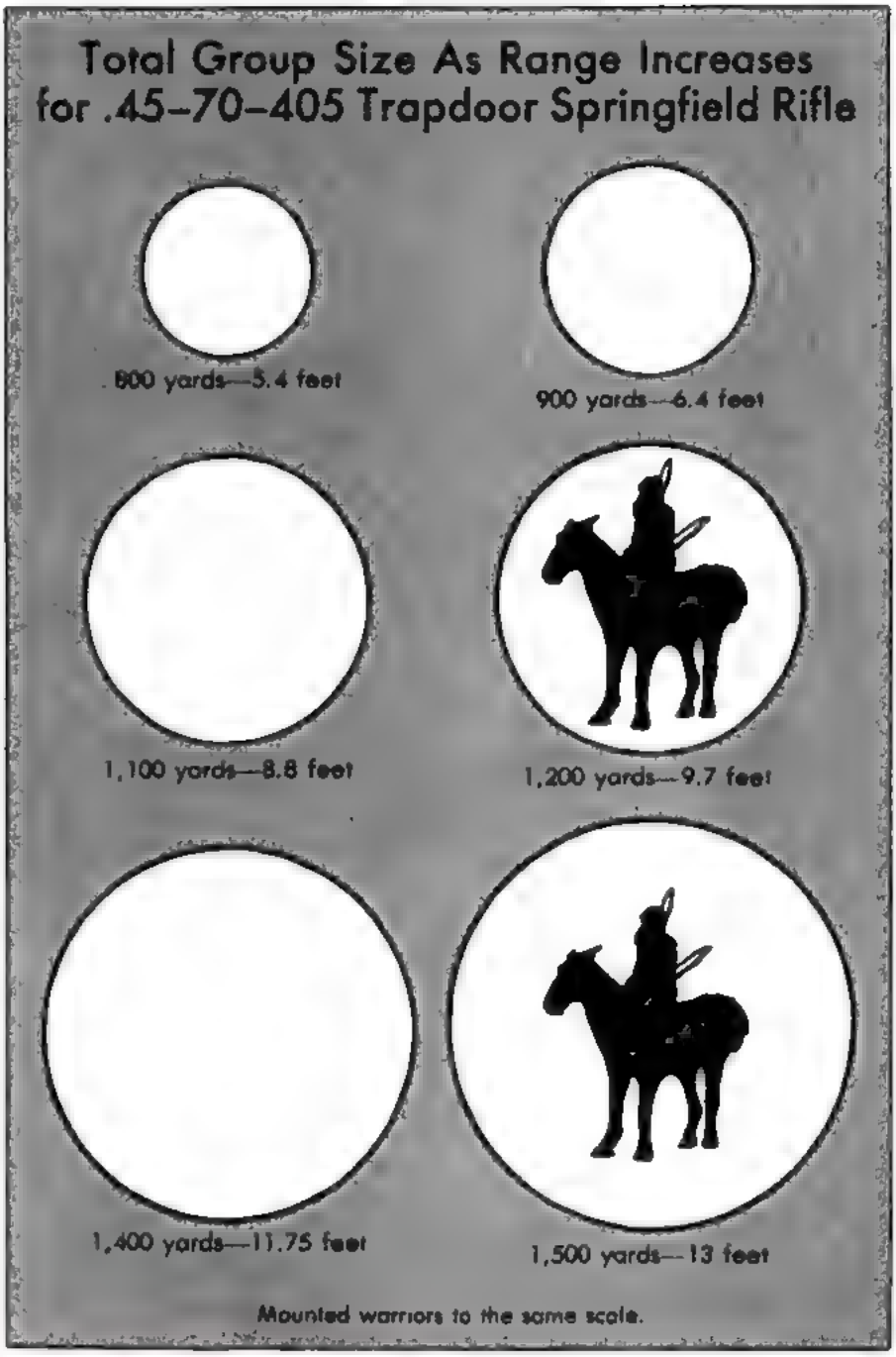
BILLY DIXON recounted the second day's fighting. "We saw only one bunch of Indians. They were on a bluff across the valley east of us. Some of our men opened up on them at long range; the Indians returned the fire and disappeared. It was plain to them that there was still a lot of fight left in us."

Buffalo hunter Willis Skelton Glenn offered an account of perhaps the same event, writing, "The white men had guns of all kinds. The Indians going back the same direction they came, quite a number were assembled on a little knoll some 1400 yards distance, thinking themselves safe. . . . These hunters with their sharp shooting rifles, did their best to dislodge these Indians. Finally one fell, and the rest ran away much surprised at such a long range shot. Each of the hunters claimed the shot and it was hard to tell who had done the work. They argued for a day or so, when some of the bolder men decided to go back to the hill and examine the Indian, and they found him shot in the back. As they could not see the edges of the lead, one of them said, 'We will see who hit him,' and out with his knife and took out the bone the ball was in and returned to camp, and it proved to be the new Sharp's .45 that had been sent there for trial."

We now come to the "long shot" which has become a permanent part of the folklore of the Adobe Walls fight. This is Billy Dixon's story, from the second edition of his biography *Life of Billy Dixon*, printed in 1927: "On the third day a party of about fifteen Indians appeared on the edge of the bluff, east of Adobe Walls Creek, and some of the boys suggested that I try the big '50' on them. *The distance was not far from seven-eighths of a mile* [emphasis added]. A number of exaggerated accounts have been written about this incident. I took careful aim and pulled the trigger. We saw an Indian fall from his horse. The others dashed out of sight behind a clump of timber. A few moments later two Indians ran quickly on foot to where the dead Indian lay, seized his body and scurried for cover. They had risked their lives, as we had frequently observed, to rescue a comrade who might not be only wounded but dead. I was admittedly a good marksman, yet this was what might be called a 'scratch' shot."

This account is almost evasively modest except for the emphasized part. The editor of the 1927 edition of Dixon's book changed that sentence. The original 1914 printing, published the year after Dixon's death, claimed the range of Dixon's long shot was only 1,200 yards.

Dixon had every opportunity to personally check the range of the shot, for after he left buffalo hunting and finished a distinguished spell as a United States Army scout, he returned to the area and homesteaded a mile and a half south of


Total Group Size As Range Increases for .45–70–405 Trapdoor Springfield Rifle
800 yards—5.4 feet
900 yards—6.4 feet
1,100 yards—8.8 feet
1,200 yards—9.7 feet
1,400 yards—11.75 feet
1,500 yards—13 feet
Mounted warriors to the same scale.

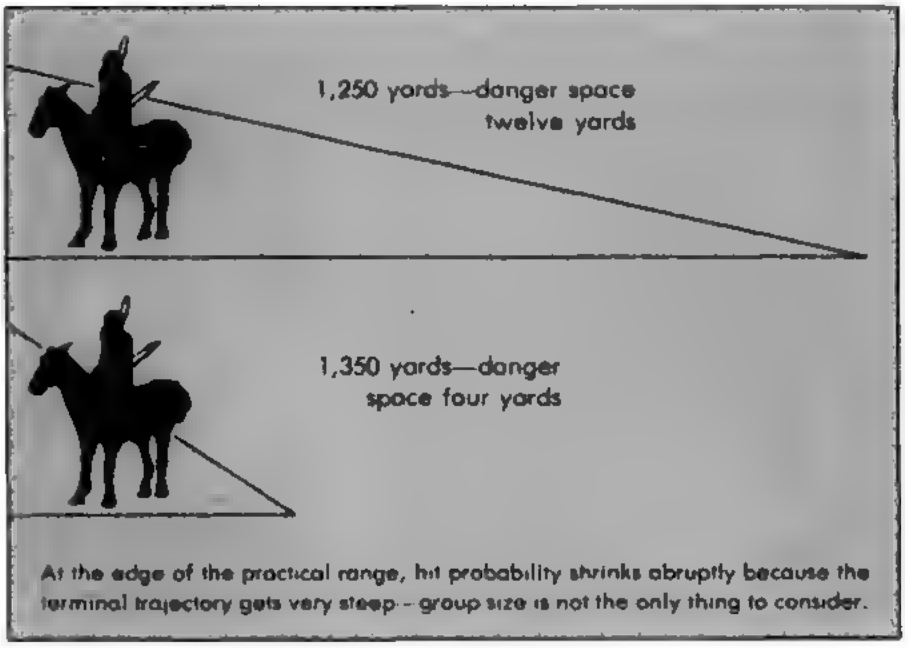
Why the 1,028-Yard Claim Was Wrong

For an Indian at the far end of this mesa to have been visible from Adobe Walls, he would have had to have been over forty feet tall. Put another way, the front edge of the bluff would have hidden any war party at the rear of the bluff from the hunters' view.

the battle site. He lived there twenty years and for most of that time was postmaster, commuting daily to the post office at the Turkey Track Ranch north of the Adobe Walls ruins. Even if he never bothered to measure the distance, he knew the first surveyors to map the area, and only had to ask them. This *should* make Dixon the expert witness to his own claim, but instead most modern historians cite the figure from the second edition of Dixon's book with the same reverent awe with which the Comanches remember the death of Ishatai's horse.

Indeed, most books give the range for Dixon's long shot as an incredibly precise 1,538 yards (two yards short of seven-eighths of a mile), which would make you think that the hunters rushed out immediately and marked the spot where the Indian fell. Careful study of a map of the area reveals the origin of the figure. If you swing an arc at a distance of 1,538 yards from the Adobe Walls historical monument, it passes through the horizontal station mark that surveyors used to map the entire valley. The figure that describes the position of the historical marker has been passed off as the range of Dixon's long shot.

The range became exaggerated in 1924 as the result of the historical marker's dedication, which Dixon's widow, Olive, and the Panhandle Plains Historical Society planned for the fight's fiftieth anniversary. Three weeks before the event, a reporter from the *Amarillo Daily News* and a surveyor visited the battle site. They took a copy of *Life of Billy Dixon*, which had a photo of a bluff with a caption claiming it as the spot where Dixon dropped the Indian. It is important to note that Dixon never said this was the bluff where the Indian was hit, only that he had seen Indians deploying in front of it on the first day of the fight. Editors captioned the picture of the bluff after Dixon's death. The surveyor quickly found that the near end of the bluff was only 700 yards from the ruins, and the far end only 1,028 yards distant. The *Amarillo Daily News* casually mentioned the bluff's far end as the place where Dixon's Indian fell. But careful map reading shows that the near end of the bluff, which was eighty-eight feet higher than Adobe Walls, would have hidden anyone on the far end.



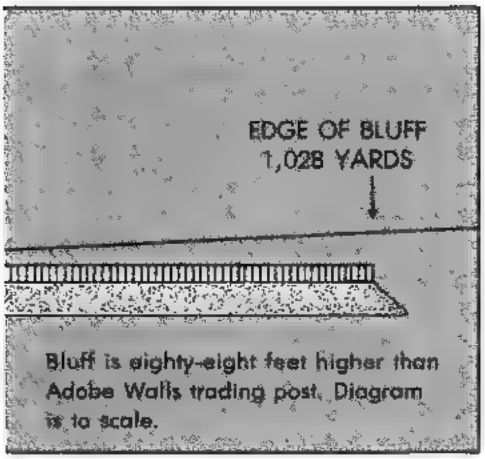
At the edge of the practical range, hit probability shrinks abruptly because the terminal trajectory gets very steep – group size is not the only thing to consider.

Suddenly Dixon's long shot was in jeopardy. Politicians, hoping the battle site would draw tourist trade, pressed for a resolution to the matter, and 1,538 yards, the distance from the horizontal station marker to the new historical marker, became the official range of Dixon's feat. The 1927 edition of *Life of Billy Dixon* echoed that change.

Features on the ground agree with both Willis Glenn's and Dixon's stories. A small bluff rises 1,200 yards from the camp, and another begins about 200 yards farther on, almost directly behind the first. In the tumult surrounding the historical marker dedication ceremony, no one looked for these bluffs; they simply picked a range that exaggerated Dixon's claim for their own benefit.

The confusion over the long shot prompted T. Lindsey Baker in *Adobe Walls—History and Archeology* to question whether the shot ever happened. The problem with such skepticism is that Indian battle veterans remembered the shot very well. They may not have remembered its location accurately, but they leave little doubt that it occurred.

In fact, two long shots might have been fired. In Glenn's account of the second day, so many hunters are shooting so many different kinds of weapons so fast that no one knows who scored a hit. They try to settle the matter with a field autopsy on the third day. In Dixon's account he fires one shot on the third day at a lesser range with a .50-90 Sharps, not the Sharps .45 that Glenn credits



Bluff is eighty-eight feet higher than Adobe Walls trading post. Diagram is to scale.

with the kill, and the Indians recover the body. The accounts differ enough possibly to refer to two separate incidents, with Glenn's more memorable to some because of the controversy, and Dixon's to others because he drew blood with one shot.

Published ballistic data support both stories. In 1873 the United States Army introduced its new round for the Trapdoor Springfield Rifle, the .45-70-405. This load had the same point form as all its military and civilian contemporaries, had about the same initial velocity, and lost that speed at just about the same rate. The ballistic coefficient of the bullet was slightly better than the .50-90-473 Sharps that Dixon used and slightly worse than the .45-75-420 Sharps that Glenn refers to in his account. Accuracy data on this load out to 1,100 yards were gathered from actual firings at the National Armory. The figures (including an aiming error that can't be avoided with iron sights) increase at a uniform rate from 500 to 1,100 yards. Simple extrapolation can show what the group size for an effective shot will be at any range up to 1,600 yards. The hunters' weapons were likely to have been somewhat better than those used at the National Armory, as they had better barrel weights and trigger pulls, but both military and civilian rounds at the time were on the edge of contemporary technology. Commercial outfits like Sharps and Remington tested their new rounds with target shooters and buffalo hunters, usually coming to the same conclusions as the army.

At 1,500 yards all shots will fall inside a thirteen-foot circle, and about half will be within four feet of its center. Assuming an unconcealed man exposes about eight square feet of target area, one might think the odds of hitting a single warrior were something better than one in sixteen, and maybe closer to one in ten, supposing the marksman had perfectly estimated range and wind. But the pattern made on a vertical target doesn't tell the whole story, for other army data show that at 1,500 yards the bullet falls so steeply that the total danger space is less than four yards. Thus, a bullet might hit a single man, but only by an inhumanly accurate estimation of the range, or some lucky combination of errors.

Now Dixon's shot can be clearly evaluated. The range to the top of the bluff he mentions is 1,250 yards. Here the group size would be ten feet and the danger space twelve yards. Dixon was shooting at a group target wider and deeper than that; his chances of hitting something useful to the enemy, be it man or horse, were excellent. What he considered a "scratch" shot was really a smart shot.

The fiftieth anniversary of the battle at Adobe Walls was a grand Texas party with barbecue and speeches that drew about 2,000 citizens who were not too picky about what Billy Dixon did or what claims were put in his mouth. In 1929 Dixon was re-buried at Adobe Walls as history by then considered his long shot there to be his major triumph. His fight at Buffalo Wallow, also in 1874, earned him a Congressional Medal of Honor but had receded to footnote status.

In 1941, the Indians put up a marker to their own dead, and the site now stirs images of the brave men on both sides of the fight. As Quanah Parker put it, "They killed us in sight and out of sight."

"A number of exaggerated accounts have been written about this incident. I took careful aim and pulled the trigger. We saw an Indian fall from his horse. The others dashed out of sight behind a clump of timber. A few moments later two Indians ran . . . to where the dead Indian lay, seized his body and scurried for cover."

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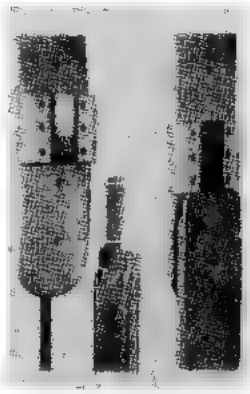

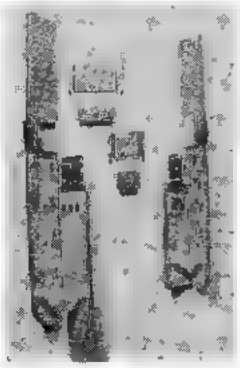

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Witness to a Hanging

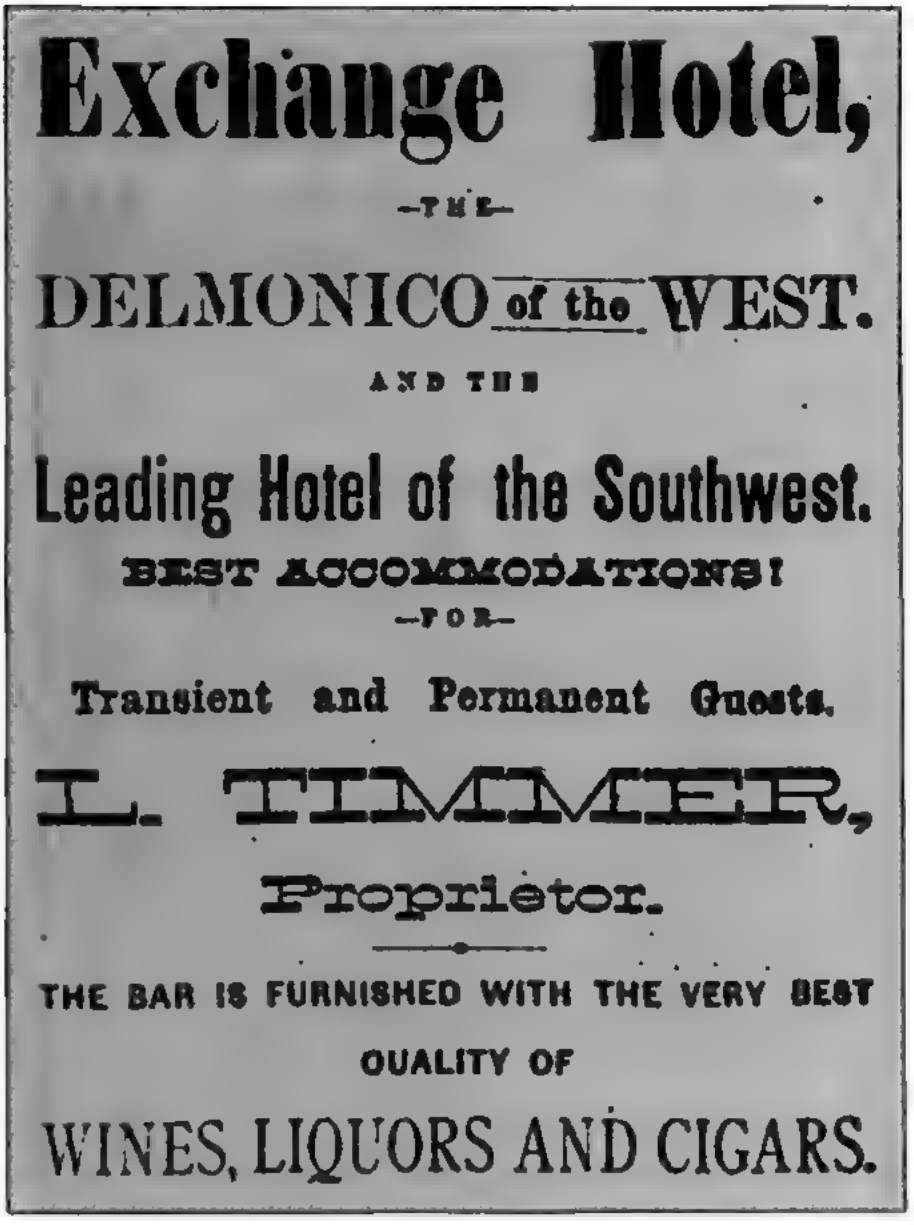
By OSCAR W. WILLIAMS

Edited by ROBERT J. TORREZ

Editor's Note: *Public hangings probably were among the most popular and well attended events in the American West. Thousands of people witnessed those frequently ghastly events, yet surprisingly few wrote personal accounts. One of the most fascinating of the few accounts which have survived is by Oscar W. Williams, who recalled the March 14, 1881, hanging of Richard Remine at the southwest New Mexico mining town of Silver City.*

Williams' letter, written to a relative in China in 1925, contrasts sharply with the cold and impersonal facts normally found in official documents and newspaper reports of the time. Despite having been written nearly half a century after Williams witnessed the event, the letter is nonetheless an incredibly accurate document. When compared to the documentary record, a few errors are evident. Mostly regarding proper names and other minor details, none of the errors detracts from an extraordinary description of a fairly common, but rarely so intimately described, occurrence in frontier New Mexico.

We know little about Oscar W. Williams except for his involvement in a series of civil suits over ownership of mining claims in Grant County. The dates of the suits verify he was in Silver City at the time of Remine's execution. His letter is courtesy of the Silver City Museum, Silver City, New Mexico.—R.T.



The New Southwest and Grant County Herald, November 4, 1882

Advertisement for the Exchange Hotel where Oscar Williams was staying at the time he volunteered to witness Richard Remine's execution.

Fort Stockton, Texas
January 25, 1925

Mr. J.C. Williams
Care of Texas Co.
Hankow, China

My Dear J.C.:

Once and once only have I seen a man pay the extreme penalty of the law for his crime. It was not an experience which a normal man would desire to witness. But the story of his crime and its punishment will develop some peculiar incidents, and will serve to illustrate the temper of the people in those frontier days, and the conditions under which the law was administered better than any other way in my power, so I have decided to write it for you. I believe my memory can be depended upon as to all the facts which came within my personal knowledge, but I can not be so assured as to the facts which came to me from the lips of others. But such as I will set out on information were believed by me at the time to be proven, although as the story goes back some 45 years, you can readily understand the chances of error.

In the spring of 1881, I spent some days in Silver City, New Mexico, at what was then known as the Timmer Hotel. There was a stone coping in front of the hotel marking the division between the sidewalk and the street, and it was the custom of the guests, and town idlers, after meals to sit out with feet elevated on this coping to discuss such news and gossip as might be current in the town. While so engaged one evening after supper I saw a man, with a basket on his arm, pass through a gate leading to the kitchen from the enclosure at the back part of the hotel. I

John Harlan Collection, Silver City Museum

The Timmer House, built by Louis Timmer, a noted hosteler, in 1883. This magnificent building, which replaced the Exchange where Williams stayed, was severely damaged by flooding in 1904 and had to be demolished.

had seen this man at other times pass through this gate with a basket on his arm, and always he was alone. I asked my companions about his name and purpose. I was told that his name was Remine and that he was carrying food to the prisoners in the jail some four blocks distant. "Oh!" I said, "a deputy sheriff or a jailer!" No, they said, he was a prisoner under sentence of death. Now it was almost dark at the time, the hotel building was at the foot of a hill at the extreme edge of the town buildings; there was a rocky canon a few yards south where the hiding was good, and apparently the chance of escape for the prisoner was excellent. So it was with a good share of astonishment that I set out to learn the man's story. This is what I was told.

Remine and a man named Winterburn from Albany, New York, occupied a room in a building in the little burg of Central City a few miles distant from Silver City. They cooked their food in this room and slept in a double bed. Winterburn seldom indulged in drink, but Remine drank to excess, and when intoxicated was a quarrelsome, evil-tempered man. One night late on coming to the room much the worse for drink he found Winterburn lying across the bed asleep in a position which interfered with Remine's attempt to lie down. Angered, he procured an axe, killed the sleeping man at a single blow, and in a tempest of rage continued to hack and beat the dead body until it was cut to pieces. After this fury had been spent the drunken man dropped asleep, and was found later on the same bed with his victim. He was immediately arrested.[1]

"Once and once only have I seen a man pay the extreme penalty of the law for his crime. It was not an experience which a normal man would desire to witness. But the story of his crime and its punishment will develop some peculiar incidents, and will serve to illustrate the temper of the people in those frontier days. . . ."

Afterward he was tried for murder in Silver City, which was then the seat of Grant County. His brothers, back in Tennessee, were poor men but they helped him with such money as they could scrape together, and an attorney was employed to defend him. Ordinarily this would have almost insured his final release in a community so engrossed in the pursuit of the "Get Rich Quick" plans of the time as to be almost indifferent to any crime that did not in some way directly take a dollar away from the citizen. To exert himself to bring a criminal to justice, was to take time and energy from the hunt for a mine, and to expose his life to danger from the criminal's resentment, while there was no disposition on the part of any other citizen to aid or even to sympathize with him. The doctrine of "Laisser faire" was carried out to a high degree on those frontier mining camps, except in the matter of adopting camp rules to protect the locations of mining claims in a new camp.

[1]Grant County District Court documents show Richard Remine was convicted of first degree murder in June 1878 and sentenced to hang for the March 16, 1877, murder of Patrick Rafferty. Winterburn was another man whom Remine attempted to implicate in Rafferty's death. Remine's indictment does not provide the gruesome details but does state he killed Rafferty with numerous blows to the head, face, and chest with a hammer. There is no mention of an axe.

John Harlan Collection, Silver City Museum

Harvey H. Whitehill, early resident of Silver City and sheriff of Grant County from 1875 through 1882.

But there were notable exceptions to this rule, and the brutality of the murder brought public attention to the deed in a very unusual degree. Then too the sheriff, Whitehill, was at that time trying to make a good record in his office, and Winterburn's brother back in New York, having hired an attorney to prosecute, put up money to assist in procuring and holding for trial the witnesses necessary for conviction. So the stars went out of their usual courses to fight against Remine. In spite of his attorney, and of the delays in coming to trial, which were considered by the lawyers to be a Defendant's best defense, and in spite of the subsistence of the feeling against him, Remine on trial was found guilty and sentenced to be hung.

His attorney appealed the case, but Remine was not allowed to give bail and was kept in the Silver City jail, while his appeal took its leisurely course through the higher court, at Santa Fe.[2] When we sat out by the stone coping discussing the case it had been some months after the appeal had been taken, and any day might bring word over the military telegraph line, that stretched from Santa Fe to Silver City, that the prisoner must be hanged. The best that Remine could hope was a reversal and an order for a new trial. Yet the sheriff appeared to be giving him every chance for escape that he reasonably could. It was stated that he was allowed to go out at nights to gamble in the town, and having stayed out until after eleven o'clock one night he was sternly notified by the Sheriff that this could not be allowed as it made too much trouble to the jailer to let him in after bedtime, and that thereafter if he did not come back by ten o'clock he would "d——d sure be locked out." It was not understood why the prisoner had failed to make his escape under these circumstances, but it was believed that he was relying on his attorney's opinion that the case would surely be reversed, and in the meantime life was easy and the fare of the Timmer Hotel was good.

ABOUT A WEEK later I was told that the sheriff had received a telegram from Santa Fe stating that the upper court had approved the action of the lower court, and that the prisoner should be hung on the following Friday. So when Remine came in that evening from gambling, he was locked in to await the day set for execution. The sheriff invited me to become one of the legal witnesses provided to attend the execution and to vouch for the due carrying out of the sentence. Being possessed at the time with an itching curiosity to see how death would be met by a man who flagrantly neglected his chances to escape from it I accepted the invitation. That curiosity passed with Remine's death. I have never had it to return.

The decree of the court was executed within the palisaded enclosure around the jail and in the presence of about twenty men. The scaffold consisted of a platform of planks elevated about five or six feet above the ground, and large enough for the free movements of 5 or 6 men. There were steps on the north side to mount by, but nothing further was attached to the frame save the

[2]Williams' recollection of the inordinate length of time it took for Remine's appeals is accurate. Following the June 1878 trial, the New Mexico territorial supreme court did not affirm his conviction and death sentence until January 25, 1881. The execution was further delayed when the governor ordered a temporary reprieve to consider commuting the sentence due to questions about Remine's sanity.

Several sources, including a 1949 story by Wayne Whitehill, Sheriff Whitehill's son, confirm that Remine had an unusual amount of freedom while awaiting the higher court's decision. He apparently made no effort to escape despite ample opportunity and frequent encouragement to do so.

simple skeleton of the gallows on the eastern margin on the platform. Here there was a sliding platform of small size, projecting out from the main platform between two upright timbers, which supported on a crosspiece at the top the rope for execution. This slide could be suddenly pulled back under the main platform by means of a trigger set under the platform. We had ample time to examine the machinery by which the drop was worked before the time set for the execution. While waiting the hour, the sheriff told me that the prisoner had smoked up a half box of cigars and consumed 5 or 6 bottles of wine during the past 24 hours and had expressed his determination to meet his fate quietly and without complaint. After learning that everything was in readiness at the gallows and that the Man of God was present in spite of the prisoner's refusal to call for his presence, Sheriff Whitehill went into the jail to bring out the condemned man. He was inside for quite a few minutes, but during that period of waiting it was noticeable that the hum of conversation died down to a few whispers among the bystanders. Death was near.

AT LAST the jail door opened and the sheriff stepped out holding in his hand a box of cigars. Behind him came the prisoner. Of rather small size and insignificant presence, with a face covered by a ragged dark brown beard, and clothed in ill-fitting garments, he presented a picture which one would have passed on the street without consideration as a poor specimen of physical humanity and probably of little moral significance. But standing in the shadow of death he was invested with a strange dignity. With carefully balanced and slow steps he came out with lusterless eyes, blinking in the bright sunshine, giving an impression of one whose mind was little concerned with what was before him. The sheriff afterwards attributed this appearance to a measure of stupor brought on by the cigars and wine he had used up during the previous hours. To my mind there was something more in it than mere smoke and drink.

After a few words with the Sheriff, which I did not hear, he slowly ascended the steps assisted by the officer, and here he turned to gaze over the upturned faces, possibly hoping to meet a friendly glance. If he saw such a face he gave no sign of response. He refused some request of the clergyman with a mute shake of the head, and turning to the officer made a request which the officer seemed to grant. He then turned to his audience and began a slow halting address, which became more animated as he proceeded. It was a declaration of innocence, an assertion of perjury on the part of the prosecuting witnesses, and a charge of prejudice against the trial judge. It was rambling and disconnected, and there was so much repetition in it that it caused us to think that he was talking on to save a few wretched minutes of life. He left no message to friend or kin—no warning to young or old—and no word of hope in God or man.

He was not checked or interrupted but finally ended his talk with some inarticulate cadence deep down in the throat, as if the voice were dying before the body passed out. The preacher knelt down and prayed. If the prisoner heard a word of the prayer there was no sign of it in the stooped shoulders or in the faded eyes. When the prayer ended the deputy sheriff stepped forward and with the aid of the sheriff moved the man over so that he finally stood on the slide between the 2 upright posts and under the noosed rope. Then the prisoner's ankles were bound together and his hands were tied behind his back. Then the noose was let down and fastened around his throat, and after that the black cap was placed on his head and drawn over his eyes. As the last move before the end, the knot of the noose was turned so that it rested just under the ear of the doomed man.

The deputy stepped back and looked to the Sheriff, who gave a mute signal, and we heard the sound of the trigger as it was unlocked. The sliding platform slipped from under the feet of the dying man, and his body shot down between the uprights and stopped with a thud that caused the beating of my heart to cease for a moment. I heard the sound of indrawn breath coming from the spectators as if their hearts, too, had halted life for a second. The bound legs of the prisoner were drawn up convulsively, and pressed against his breast for a few moments with a curious quivering movement as if shaken by the passing of the soul of the dead man. Then with a slow gradual decline they lowered until the limp body hung straight down from the knotted rope. The Sheriff looked at his watch, turned to the jail and went inside to make his report to the court that at a certain hour on a certain day in obedience to the mandate of the Court he had caused the Defendant Remine to be hanged by the neck until he was dead, all in the presence of the following named witnesses, citizens of New Mexico.[3]

I went away feeling that there was something in the story of the last days of Remine that had not come to me. Here was a man threatened with death, with the gates of safety in sight, yet who apparently had made no effort to

"...standing in the shadow of death he was invested with a strange dignity. With carefully balanced and slow steps he came out with lusterless eyes, blinking in the bright sunshine, giving an impression of one whose mind was little concerned with what was before him."

[3]Sheriff Whitehill's statement on the death warrant reads, "I hereby certify that on the 14th of March AD 1881 at the County of Grant and Territory of New Mexico pursuant to the commands in the within warrant of execution...on the day and year aforesaid at the hour of two and forty six minutes of the said day I did hang him the said Richard Remine by the neck until he is dead." Remine was the third of four men hanged during Whitehill's long tenure as Grant County Sheriff. On August 20, 1880, he supervised the double execution of Charles Williams and Lewis Gaines. On March 25, 1881, he hanged William Young.

In contrast to Williams, the March 18, 1881, *Grant County Herald* reported, "The hanging of Richard Remine last Monday, passed off very quietly. A large crowd was present but there was no excitement and no demonstrations. The doomed man was remarkably cool, and except for an occasional nervous twitching of the fingers, gave no outward sign of emotion. He was smoking a cigar as he ascended the scaffold, and this he retained in his possession until Father Stagnon was prepared to administer the last rites of the church. While on the scaffold Remine expressed the hope that those before him would lead a better life than he had; and he also stated that during the four years he had been in confinement he had been treated with uniform kindness by Sheriff Whitehill and his deputies. The Sheriff and Deputy Tucker stood upon the scaffold until the drop fell, about quarter before four o'clock. The body remained hanging some twenty minutes, when life was pronounced extinct."

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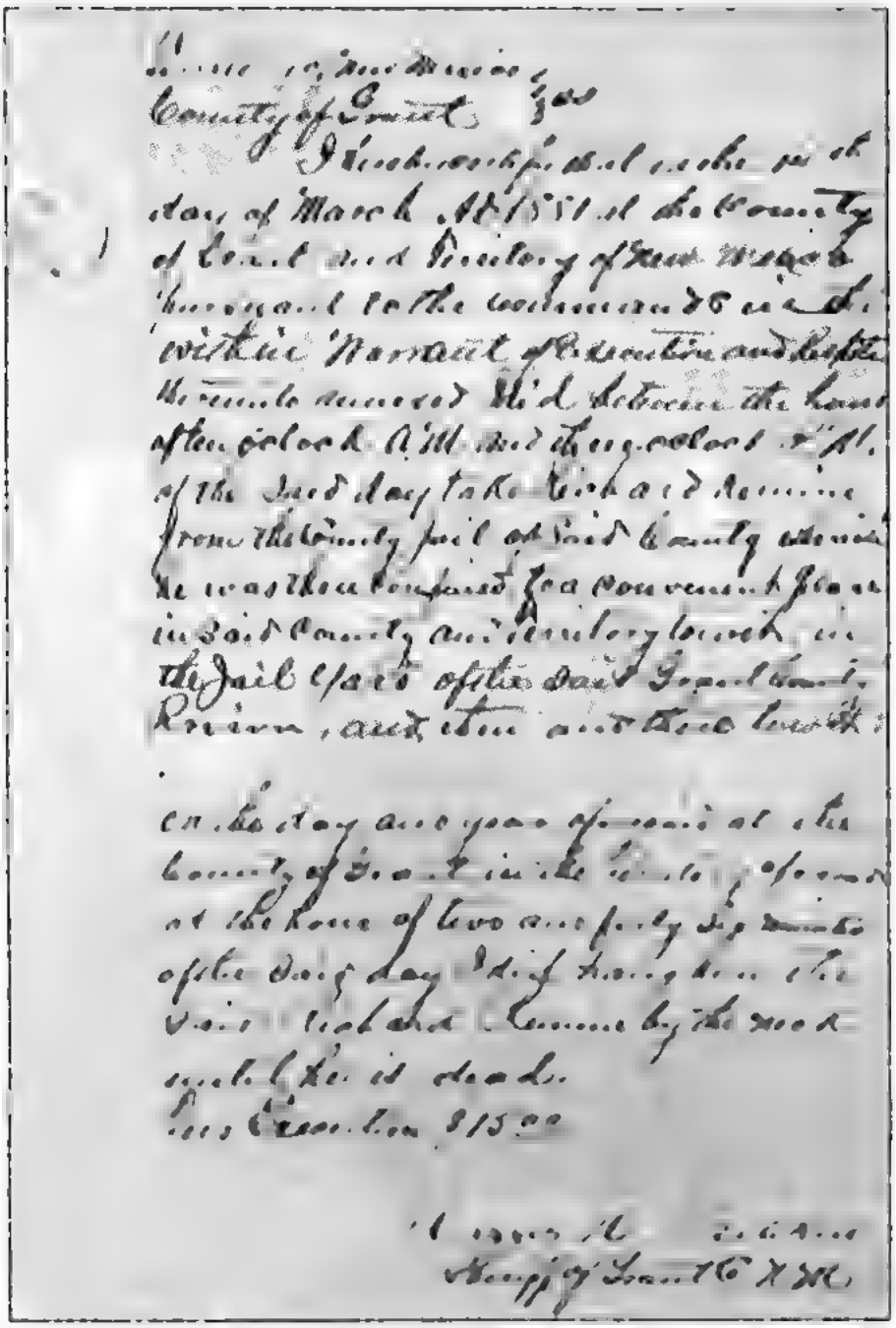

New Mexico Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe

Death warrant for Richard Remine.

pass through the portals. Around the town lay a wild world, a world of wooded hills and rocky canons, with a few small mining camps scattered about in lonely places; but the Indian and the mountain lion marauded the very borders of the parade ground in the solitary fort that guarded the foothills. It would have been an easy matter for Remine to have escaped into these hills. There hunger or the Indians might get him, but the Sheriff never. That chance was at least worth taking.

So I made some effort to find this fugitive element in the Remine story, and finally I caught the trail and followed it down. I was reminded by it of that part of the palaver of the fortune teller who examines the palms of hands and tells you that a certain line in your hand, which crosses another certain line at a certain place, is the line of Mars crossing the line of Venus, and means that at a particular time you will meet the lady you will marry. In Remine's case it meant that in jail under sentence he was to meet a woman of sinister history whose fascination led him to neglect his last chance of safety.

This woman was said to have come from California several years earlier and bore a rather doubtful reputation.[4] She must have had some personal attractions, considerable shrewdness, and a devilish disposition—judged in the light of her career about Silver City. She succeeded in getting a respectable man named Granger to make her his wife. He was a man past middle-life, having a weak-minded son, and was believed to have some money with him, and some property back in Illinois. He owned a mining prospect which he thought valuable, and had begun sinking a deep shaft on it with the aid of the son, and of a man who was known as "Silver Plate" Dick, because he continually asserted that he had a silver plate in his skull to cover a fracture. After his death it was found that he had no such plate, and it confirmed the general impression that he, too, was mentally defective.

Now the woman planned to kill her husband. So she gradually acquired a hold on Silver Plate Dick and even on the son until she made them confederates in the plan. The two men killed the old man at the shaft, threw his body in and filled the shaft up with rocks and earth taken from it, just as the woman planned. She outlined the story that was to explain Granger's disappearance, but the weak-minded confederates could not sustain the story as could the woman. In the end they confessed. When they came to their trials Silver Plate Dick was tried first, and after conviction he

[4]The woman in question was Dora Dwinger (also spelled Dwenger in many documents) from Silver City, who married an older man by the name of Henry F. Dwinger—not Granger, as recalled by Williams. Dora Dwinger and codefendants William Young ("Silver Plate Dick" in Williams' letter) and William H. Dwinger (Henry Dwinger's "weak-minded" son) were indicted by a Grant County grand jury for the elder Dwinger's murder in July 1879. Contemporary reports also refer to Young's claim that he had a silver plate in his head, but postmortem examination found no such plate.

[5]The trials for Dora Dwinger, William Dwinger, and William Young were held in March 1880 at the Dona Ana County District Court in Mesilla, New Mexico, on a change of venue from Grant County. Young, who was also known as "Parson" Young, was convicted of first-degree murder, sentenced to hang, and was executed at Silver City on March 25, 1881.

Dora Dwinger was convicted of fifth-degree murder and sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary. At the time, New Mexico did not have a territorial prison, so Dora, like other territorial convicts of the time who had been sentenced to long prison terms, was sent to Kansas state prison in Lansing, Kansas. On February 7, 1885, Governor Edmund G. Ross suspended the balance of her sentence because New Mexico's recently opened territorial prison had no "decent accommoda-

was hung. Next the boy was tried and received some fifteen years in the penitentiary. When Remine went to jail the woman was an inmate awaiting trial and after his death she was removed to Mesilla, and being tried there before a Mexican jury, received a sentence of only two or three years.[5]

Now the apartments for men and women in the Silver City jail were considerably apart, but there was a corridor in which both sexes walked for air, sunshine and exercise, separated only by an iron railing the length of the corridor. Here Remine and the woman plotted and jested, swore and cried with each other through the iron bars as each told a tale of trouble and revenge, until Remine became another victim of the woman's evil life. When the line of his life crossed the line of Granger's murderers, it meant that the days of his life were to be cut off. He could not leave the woman, or would not do so, while the road to safety yet lay open. To him the world was lost for a woman. Possibly he thought it was well lost, but there was nothing in his dying talk to indicate such a belief.[6]

O.W. Williams

tions" for female convicts and he felt it was too expensive to keep her at the Kansas facility. Dora was released under the condition she not return to New Mexico for the remainder of her unexpired sentence.

William Dwinger, the murdered man's son, was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. He escaped from the Grant County jail in early 1882 but was recaptured in late October 1882 and transferred to the Kansas state prison in January 1883. He remained in the Kansas facility until December 18, 1886, when Governor Ross suspended his sentence and ordered him released.

[6]Grant County jail records show that for over two years—from the time of their arrest on February 28, 1879, until Remine's execution on March 14, 1881—Dora Dwinger, William Young, and the younger Dwinger did share jail facilities with Remine. The alleged relationship between Remine and Dora Dwinger has nowhere else been detailed, so we can only speculate if the woman's influence kept Remine from escaping when he could so easily have done so. Maybe Dora did befriend Remine in the hope that the uncommon degree of freedom he enjoyed could be used to help her and her cohorts escape. On the other hand, maybe Richard Remine felt he should pay the penalty for his crime as dictated by the court—an honorable decision not totally foreign to that time and place in our history.

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Matt Bledsoe: Man-Killer

By ROY O'DELL

Matt Bledsoe is almost forgotten in the history of the Old West, even though he is ranked as one of the most desperate man-killers the region ever saw.

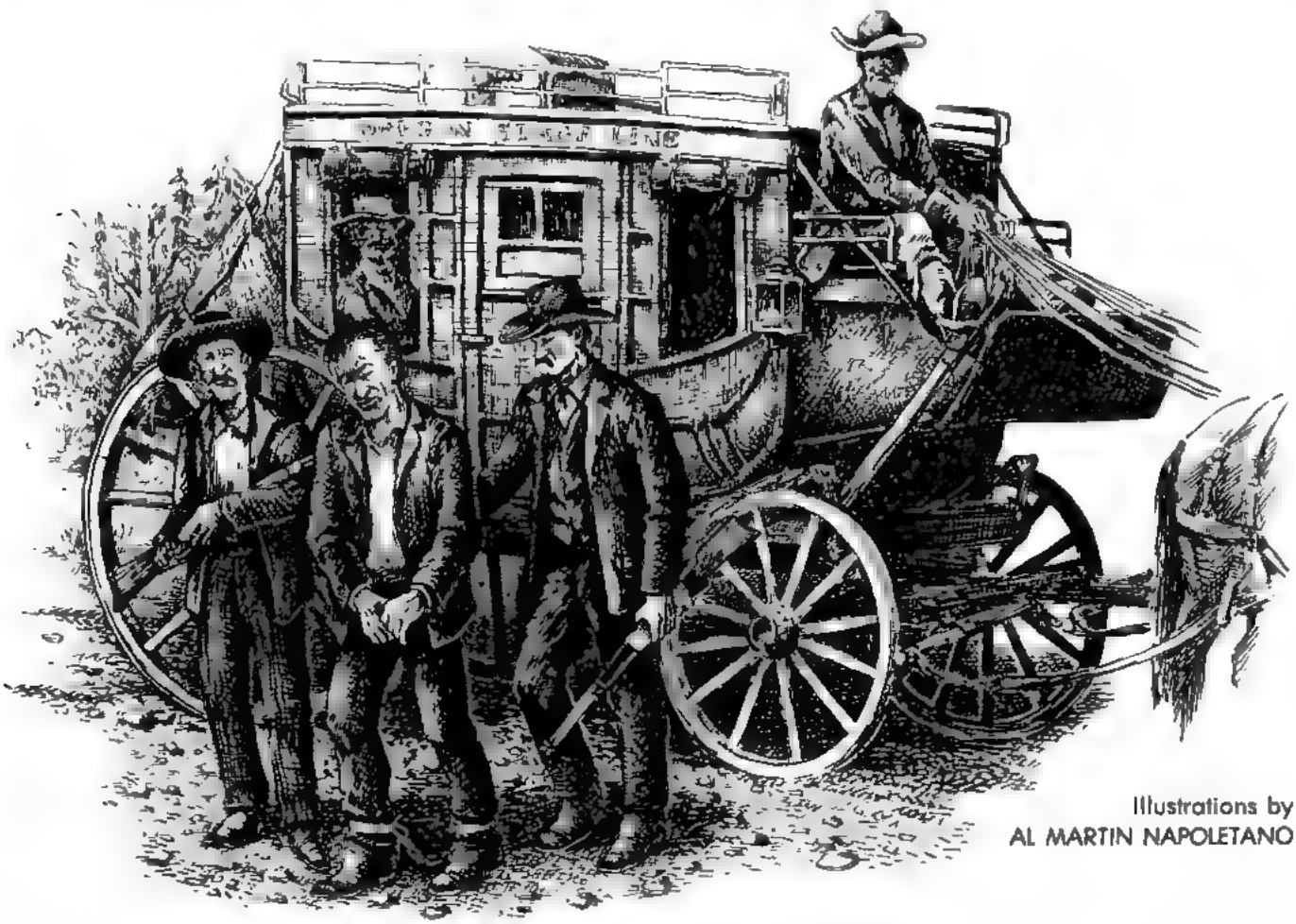
Nathaniel Pitt Langford in his book *Vigilante Days and Ways,* published in 1890, claims that, "Bledsoe became a notorious independent freebooter," and that he killed several persons in the valley of the Upper Sacramento and Upper Willamette.

Bledsoe had a bloody character before his arrival at Florence, Idaho, in the fall of 1861. According to Langford, he acknowledged no allegiance to any band and avowed as a ruling principle that he would "as soon kill a man as eat his breakfast." While engaged in a game of cards with a miner at a ranch on White Bird Creek in October 1861, Bledsoe provoked an altercation. But the miner being armed, Bledsoe did not, as was usual with him, follow it up by an attack. The next morning, while the miner was going to the creek, Bledsoe shot and killed him.

Mathew "Matt" Bledsoe was an obscure character. From whence he came is unknown, although stories claimed he was the second cousin of the famous Captain Relf Bledsoe, a noted campaigner against the Indians in Southern Oregon during the 1850s.

The first mention of Bledsoe is his arrival in the goldfields of Florence, Idaho, during the fall of 1861. The thought of easy pickings attracted many undesirables to the area, including Henry Plummer, "Cherokee Bob" Talbotte, Billy Mayfield, Bill Bunton, Boone Helm, Charley Harper, Bill Willoghby, and Charley Ridgely.

Matt was not long in town before he notched up his first known killing. The



Illustrations by
AL MARTIN NAPOLETANO

"Matt Bledsoe the notorious desperado, who strolled away from our Penitentiary grounds not long since, was brought in, heavily ironed, the other morning, on the stage."

Oregon Statesman of January 6, 1862, picks up the story: "Mathew Bledsoe shot James S. Harman, generally known as 'Pike,' a packer formerly packing to Elk City, on Sunday last, at the mouth of Slate Creek on Salmon River. The quarrel arose at the card table the night before, and was renewed by Harman next day, when after a few words Bledsoe drew his pistol and shot him through the head. Bledsoe has gone to Walla Walla, (Washington) to give himself up for trial, and was acquitted."

Matt seems to have kept out of trouble for some time, making a living as a gambler drifting from town to town. But on July 22, 1863, in Placerville, Idaho, he was involved in an argument with a Dr. I.H. Harris. Bledsoe fired several shots at the doctor, who in return inflicted a terrible stab wound to Bledsoe's chest.

During 1863, Bledsoe was reputed to have joined the infamous "Sagebrush Rangers," who made their headquarters at Horseshoe Bend on the Payette River. Jeff Standifer was the captain of the band and Matt was reputedly made a lieutenant. The band stole horses, killed small parties of Indians, and terrorized law-abiding people. The band attacked a camp of Malheur Indians while the men were away, killed the old women and children, and kept twenty-eight of the young women whom they mistreated shamefully.

Matt left Idaho and headed for Oregon, where he bragged about killing Indians to all who would listen, but all he ever killed were old men, women, and children. One time as Matt was passing the hotel, "the Blue Mountain House," in the wild town of Umatilla, a young boy in the road was waving a small American flag. Matt took it away from him, broke it, threw it in the road, and trampled on it. The hotel owner, a man named Meacham, saw the boy crying and asked what the problem was. When he found out, Meacham got on his horse, followed hell-for-leather after Bledsoe, pulled him off his horse, and beat him. When Bledsoe cringed and begged for mercy. Meacham kicked him unmercifully, even though the desperado was fully armed.

On another occasion Bledsoe killed a man named Mose Milner for his pretty young wife. She was plump as a quail with dark eyes, abundant black hair, and a wonderful smile. Matt wanted her but was afraid of her husband. He managed to get to their house at dusk one night, and of course was invited to stay all night. He got in a game of cards with Milner after supper, and suddenly

While engaged in a game of cards with a miner at a ranch on White Bird Creek in October 1861, Bledsoe provoked an altercation. But the miner being armed, Bledsoe did not, as was usual with him, follow it up by an attack. The next morning, while the miner was going to the creek, Bledsoe shot and killed him.

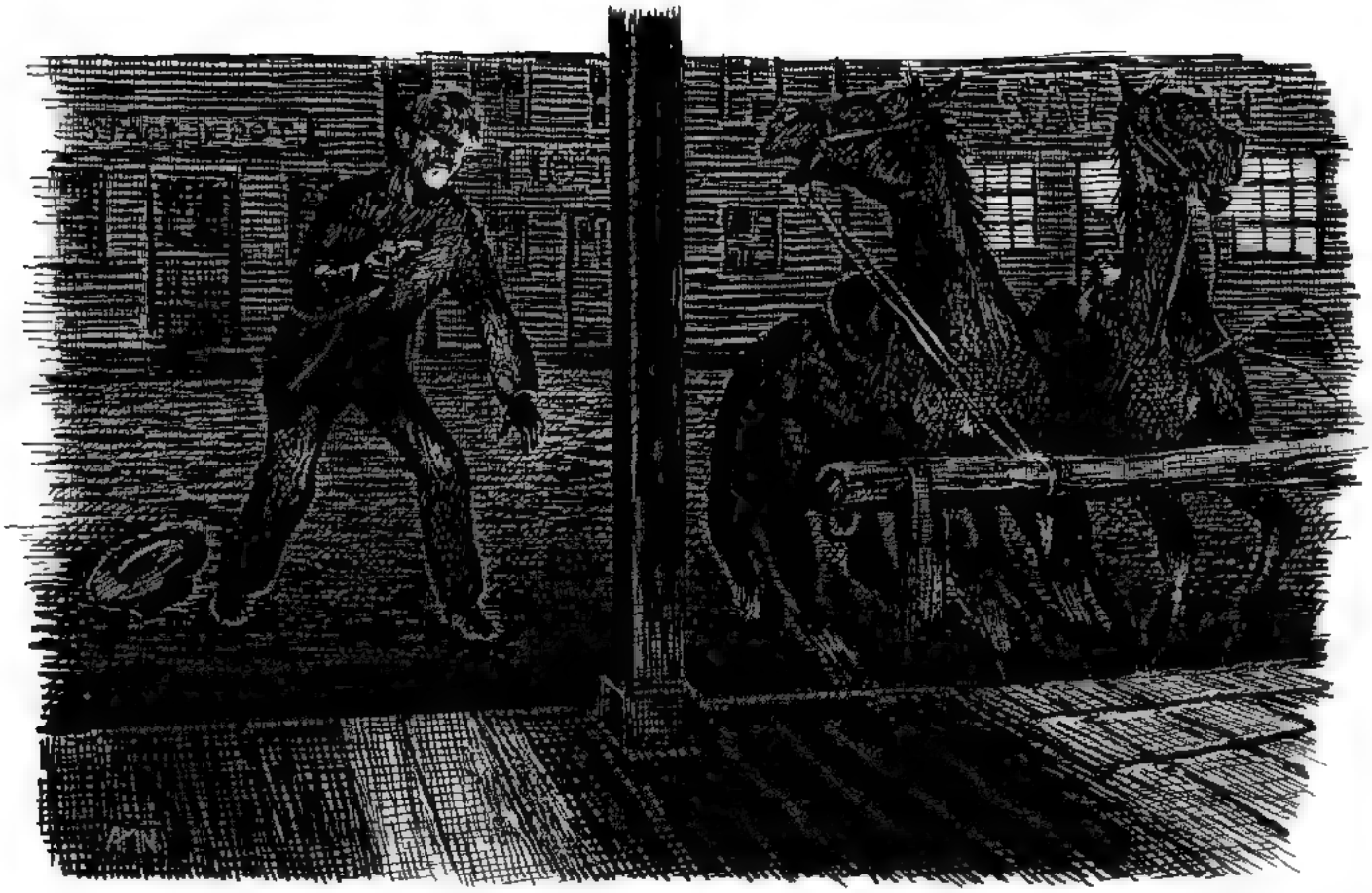
pulled his revolver and killed him. Bledsoe claimed it was in self-defense, and as there were no witnesses, he got away with it—also with Milner's wife.

Matt ran a saloon in Umatilla and one night a quiet, reserved little chap named Johnny Ryan was in Matt's saloon. Matt had been drinking and was very quarrelsome. He started on Ryan, but Ryan wouldn't stand for it. He said to Matt, "If you are looking for a fight, come out on the street and we will shoot it out." Matt agreed and they started out of the saloon, Ryan ahead and Matt following him. As Ryan walked down the step Matt pulled his gun and fired. Ryan fell, but getting to his feet he began firing at Matt. Matt crouched back of the doorway and emptied his pistol at Ryan, hitting him twice. Later, when Ryan was recovering from his wounds, Matt visited him and professed to be sorry for his deed. He said, "Johnny, you and I don't want any more trouble. If you will let bygones be bygones I'll agree to let you alone. No matter what comes up, I'll never draw my gun on you again."

Ryan wasn't looking for a fight, so he agreed. He celebrated his recovery by accepting Matt's invitation to visit the saloon and have a drink to seal their friendship. Matt stepped up to the bar beside him and when Ryan reached out to get his glass of whiskey, Matt pulled his gun and said, "I've got you now and I'll settle your hash this time." Ryan had his left hand in his coat pocket where he concealed a revolver. Turning toward Matt he pressed the muzzle of the pistol against Matt's stomach and said, "You low down skunk, don't you suppose I was looking for that. Pull the trigger of your gun and I'll splatter you all over the wall."

Matt's next shooting affray took place in another Umatilla saloon April 7, 1864, when he shot a gambler named Jim Bruno, in a fight that apparently started while the two were gambling. Bruno took three balls, one in the left arm, one in the right shoulder, and one near the groin. The wounds were severe, but not dangerous. Bledsoe was uninjured, and later acquitted. Bruno was taken to The Dalles for treatment.

Matt left town soon thereafter and was reputed to have killed a man named Hugh Feney in Eugene City before turning up in Portland. There he committed another killing. The October 31, 1864, *Daily Oregonian* picks up the story: "Charley Cavin, a former bar-tender at The Office saloon in this city, and Matt Bledsoe, a man known everywhere almost on the Pacific coast, met on Friday night [October 28], at the corner of Morrison and First streets, where they got into an altercation concerning their relations or claims to one of the two



Ryan said to Matt, "If you are looking for a fight, come out on the street and we will shoot it out." Matt agreed and they started out of the saloon. As Ryan walked down the step Matt pulled his gun and fired. Ryan fell, but getting to his feet he began firing at Matt.

women who were accompanying Bledsoe to an oyster saloon, which resulted in the killing of Cavin. The matter was investigated before Justice Anderson on Saturday evening, when Bledsoe was held for his appearance at the next term of the Circuit Court, in the sum of $5,000, in default of which he was committed to jail. The evidence intended to show that Cavin had drawn a knife on Bledsoe, when the latter knocked him down with the butt of a pistol, and struck him twice afterwards about the head. The deceased was then left when through the assistance of friends he made his way to a saloon near by, washed the blood from his face and head, then was taken to bed where he was found lifeless on Saturday morning."

The *Oregon Statesman* on November 21 said that, "Matt Bledsoe has been indicted at Portland for murder in the 2nd degree, and his trial set for Monday, the 20th. He has been, two or three times, cleared from similar charges, upon technicalities, or a successful plea of self defense. The world—and especially Oregon—would be the better for the absence in another sphere, of such desperadoes."

The November 26 *Oregon State Journal* noted that, "The trial of Mathew Bledsoe, for the murder of Chas Cavin, commenced at Portland on last Tuesday. Mr. E.W. Hodgkinson, District Attorney, and Hon. George H. Williams appeared for the prosecution, and Messrs. J.H. Mitchell, L.F. Mosher and J.F. McCoy for the defendant. The court room was crowded, and much interest, was manifested in the trial. The first day was spent in examining witnesses. On Wednesday the case was submitted to the jury, and they brought in a verdict of 'guilty of murder in the second degree.'"

A Judge Shattock sentenced Bledsoe to life imprisonment. From his cell in the Portland jail he wrote a long letter in which he paid compliments to the judge, attorneys, and sheriff. The *Oregonian* published the letter.

EDITOR OREGONIAN

Having just received my sentence, I feel it due to myself and friends to state that I shall always believe the act for which I was convicted, was one entirely in self-defense; and that I am about to commence a career of punishment which may terminate only with my life. I shall forever bear within my bosom the pleasing consciousness of innocence.

To those connected with my trial, I return my grateful acknowledgements: To Judge Shattuck [sic] for the able and important manner with which he conducted the suit throughout; for the able as well as lenient charge to the jury at its close; and for the sympathy evinced in pronouncing sentence. For these, I shall forever feel grateful. To the Prosecuting Attorneys also, for the forebearance and avoidance of any remarks calculated to mortify or wound my feelings during the progress of the trial; and let me here, also return thanks to Gov. Gibbs for his selection of so able and gentlemanly a lawyer as Judge Williams as one of the prosecution.

To my own counsel I know not how to address myself. The untiring industry with which they have labored in my cause; the unceasing and unswerving assiduity with which they have pried into the smallest minutiae calculated to promote my interest, and their gentlemanly de-

portment throughout, deserves something more than mere thanks, and I hope the day may yet arrive when I can remunerate them as their conduct merits and as I could wish. To the jury, also, for the patient manner they listened to the trial throughout, and their final verdict, I feel thankful. And last though not least, to Sheriff Stitzel and his deputy Mr. Arnold, I am grateful for the undeviating kindness and obliging disposition envinced by both throughout my confinement.

I have received many marks of Kindness from the citizens of Portland during my acquaintance, which shall always hold a place in my memory, let me be placed in whatever circumstances I may. I now to one and all bid farewell, hoping they will not view me in the most discordant light, but will cast the mantle of charity over my past conduct; for I am but human. All are liable to err, and none are perfect.

Yours, & c.,
MATHEW BLEDSOE
Portland Jail, Dec. 2nd, 1864.

On May 16, 1866, the convicts at the Portland prison were transferred to the newly built prison at Salem. Immediately, chaos and confusion erupted in the form of escapes. During the month of August 1866, 115 prisoners fled the prison through its wooden wall or fence. On August 17, 1866, just seventeen days prior to the expiration of his term of office, Superintendent A.C. Shaw, Warden Allard, and Brickyard Foreman Alden were seized by a large group of convicts armed with butcher knives and intent upon escape. At least one convict was shot to death and several other men were wounded, including Allard. But eight convicts made a successful if bloody escape.

From the *Oregon Statesman*, dated September 3, 1866, came the report: "In the afternoon of Monday last, Bledsoe one of the convicts and notorious desperado, called upon Mr. Allard, the Warden, for some medicine. The Warden on entering the office to obtain it, was suddenly seized by Bledsoe; wrenching himself loose, he sprang for the door, where he was met and seized by four or five others of the convicts, who had armed themselves with knives from the kitchen. About the same time, Mr. Shaw, the Superintendent, was seized by two of the convicts at the blacksmith shop and forced to go quickly along with them, assuring him that no harm should be done if he did so. On turning around, Mr. Shaw saw the Warden being forced toward him, bleeding at the mouth.

"At this juncture, Bledsoe, leaving the warden, came to Mr. Shaw and being armed with a butcher knife threatened him with death if he made any disturbance; to which the superintendent replied that he should do his duty at any peril.

"Here Mr. Alden, foreman of the brickyard, was brought up, he having also been captured, and the whole party was forced along toward the east end of the new building where there was an opening in the fence.

"When they had passed the end of the building, Messrs. Barry and Hurley, two guards who were stationed on the platform of the fence, came opposite to them and within thirty or forty feet.

"Mathew Bledsoe shot James S. Harman, generally known as 'Pike,' a packer formerly packing to Elk City, on Sunday last, at the mouth of Slate Creek on Salmon River."

"The superintendent ordered the guards to fire, but they, seeing the dangers to the officers, did not comply. The party soon reached the opening of the fence where several guards were stationed. As the temporary fence was reached, Mr. Shaw clinched his arm around one of the pieces of which it was composed, causing a halt among those who held him. Allard and Alden were forced on through the passage. When the convicts, noticing their exposed situation, began to retreat, Bledsoe and Wright fled for the brush. The guards opened fire and Wright was brought down while Bledsoe escaped with a wound in the left shoulder. The main body retreated within the closure and soon made another rush for the fence where eight more escaped and several more were turned back even though they were beyond the fence.

"The names of those who succeeded in getting away were Matt Bledsoe, Julian Ladrew, James Lambert, Thomas Daniels, Frank Williams, George Douglas, Nelson Hauxhurst, and F.J. White."

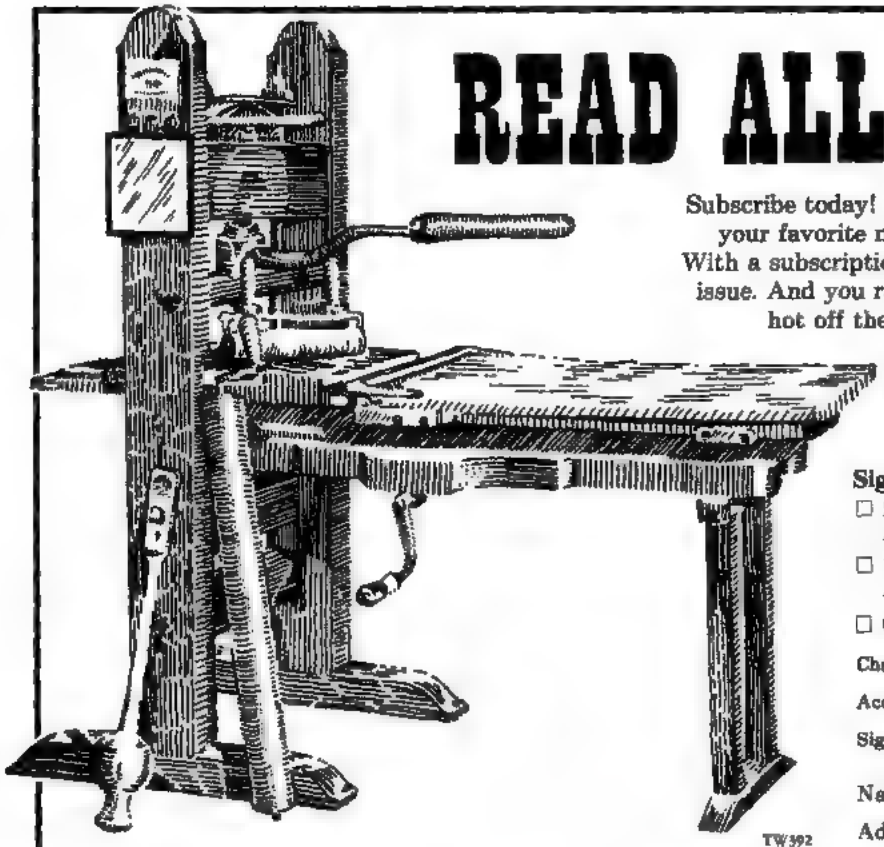
Bledsoe's escape was short lived, as the *Oregon Statesman* reported. "ARRIVED—Matt Bledsoe the notorious desperado, who strolled away from our Penitentiary grounds not long since, was brought in, heavily ironed, the other morning, on the stage. He was taken at Ashland, Southern Oregon, enroute for Mexico. He states that having received a flesh wound in the thigh in breaking away from the guards, he was forced to remain in the vicinity of Salem, several days after the escape."

MATT BLEDSOE was pardoned by Governor S.F. Grover on December 25, 1872. Later, he was in Arizona, perhaps on his way to Mexico at that time. He should have kept on traveling, but he picked on one man too many. On January 9, 1877, he was shot dead in a saloon in Prescott, by Thomas P. Kerr, himself no stranger to killing.

The *Arizona Legislative Journal* of Tucson reported the affair on Friday, January 12. "The investigation in the case of the shooting of Matt Bledsoe by Thos. P. Kerr, continued in Justice Neugas's court from Wednesday to Thursday, was concluded on Thursday.

"All the evidence being in, Briggs Goodrich, District Attorney, moved for the discharge of the prisoner upon the grounds that the evidence proved that the defendant in killing Matt Bledsoe acted in pure self defense. The deceased no doubt, and from the circumstances surrounding the case, intended manifestly by violence and surprise to commit a felony. Following up the quarrel between the parties commencing at the Gem Saloon, into Hovey's Saloon, it appears from the evidence in general that the deceased was always the assailant. The defendant endeavored to leave the house and declined struggle or trouble at the time of the dispute between Hovey and deceased, and there and then on the eve of leaving, the defendant was assaulted in a violent manner by the deceased, with his right hand on his pistol, and then and there the mortal blows were given. From the evidence the deceased was a powerful, dangerous and violent man, and as stated by witnesses, defendant could not leave the house without taking chances of being shot by the deceased."

Mathew "Matt" Bledsoe was buried the next day in the local cemetery at Prescott, Arizona. He died as he had lived—violently.



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Lewis

I am seeking information about the descendants of Alonzo Lewis. He was the son of Alfred J. and Phoebe Lewis and the grandson of Daniel Tompkins Lewis. He left Lenawee County, Michigan, between 1905 and 1910 and resided in the Muscatine, Iowa, area.

We know that the entire clan then moved to Saskatchewan, presumably to the Saskatoon area. I would appreciate any information, or hearing from any of Mr. Lewis' descendants.—**Dale A. Lewis, 32 Ahrens Avenue, Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48043.**

Brown

My grandfather, Robert Lincoln Brown, was born on the north side of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1866. When his older brother, John, shot a man in a gunfight in Pittsburgh, the two fled to Oklahoma where they lived with uncles Samuel and Robert Hare (or Herr). Bob Brown was called "Linc" to avoid confusion with his uncle, who was also called Bob. John Brown died of consumption while there. By 1899, Bob Brown had returned to Pennsylvania and was married to my grandmother, Bessie Ramsden.

Samuel Hare is listed as a farmer, living with his wife, Ada, in Noble County, Oklahoma, on the 1900 census. No record of Bob Hare has been found. I would appreciate any information on the Hare brothers, or the Brown brothers, while they were in the West.—**Jim Leisure, 2817 North East Street, Apartment A, Flagstaff, Arizona 86004.**

McCormick

I am researching my husband's family history and need some help. In doing my research I find his great-great-grandfather, James D. McCormick, was sheriff of Placer County, California, from 1869 to 1877. James married Ann (maiden name unknown) in New York around 1835 and had five children. They were Emma, John R., Margaret, Hester Jane "Hettie," and Annie Katherine "Kate." John R. married a Martha E. (maiden name unknown); Margaret married George Steadman; Hettie, John White; and Kate, William R. Hicks.

Ann died in 1851 and James placed the children in the Pleasant Hills Shaker Orphanage in Mercer County, Kentucky, in February 1852. By the fall of 1852 he was in California. There he married Honora Farrell in 1858 and had nine more children. They were Ella, who married James M. Jacobs; James, who married Julia E. Walsh; Henry D.; Mary, who married Albert W. Kension; Anna, who married E.J. Mulligan; Emma, who married Daniel Kirby; Thomas F.; Hetty, who married a man with the last name of Dunman; and Elviline "Dolly," who married J.J. Reeves. I will answer all letters and will share all my information.—**Betty Lang Walker, 13705 Vista Oaks Drive, Leander, Texas 78641.**

Linley

I am looking for additional information about John R. Linley, a physician, surgeon, and obstetrician. He was born in Illinois about 1837. I would like to know who his parents were and where they were from?

Linley was a resident of the neutral strip in Oklahoma from the 1870s to the 1890s. He had two sons and a daughter who had all been born in Illinois; however, the exact place is unknown. He practiced medicine in Beaver City. Linley did not serve in the army. I would appreciate any information.—**Robert W. Linley, Jr., 154 Elm Street, Monroe, Connecticut 06468.**

Rider-Taylor

I am looking for information on Frances Rider Taylor. Her first name might have been Mary. She was born about 1887 and married John Elmer Rider in 1901. They were from Oklahoma and Arkansas. She later married Austin Taylor and lived in Texas about 1913. I would appreciate any information.—**Carla Thompson, Route 1, Box 246, Telar, Texas 78476.**

Readers' letters for "Trails Grown Dim" are printed as soon as space permits, so please be patient. Please type or print your query and limit letters to 150 words or less. Photos are welcome. We can't run current "missing persons" notices or lengthy genealogical requests, but we do attempt to print all letters as soon as we can. Any reader having information concerning persons referred to above is asked to communicate directly with the letter writer; please do not write to us.

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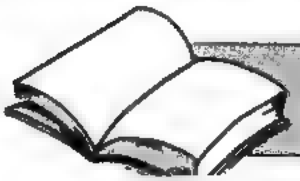

Books

Rewriting Trail History

Mary Donoho: New First Lady of the Santa Fe Trail, by Marian Meyer. (Ancient City Press, P.O. Box 5401, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502. $19.95 cloth bound, $9.95 paper bound.)

It is obvious that much thought and effort has gone into making *Mary Donoho: New First Lady of the Santa Fe Trail* an attractive book. The author has done extensive, thorough research, and the publishers have packaged the story in an inviting cover and have used many devices to give the text eye appeal. Unfortunately, the contents of the volume may well disappoint readers hoping to learn details about Mary's claim to being the earliest Anglo woman to travel the Santa Fe Trail. No letters, diaries, or even newspaper accounts were found to document either her sojourn across the plains or her residence in Santa Fe.

In spite of Meyer's impressive, exhaustive research, the only substantial details unearthed were of Mary Donoho's later life as a wife, mother, and innkeeper in Texas. That required the author to incorporate much general knowledge of Santa Fe Trail travel and life in early Santa Fe during the period of the Mexican regime, then conjecture that Mary Donoho "probably" did this or "possibly" knew that person. As a matter of fact, it would seem that the quantity of available data on Mary Donoho's personal life would more appropriately support an article in a historical review than a full-length book. It is unfortunate that Mary Donoho did not keep a diary or leave a descriptive written record, for she was unique in being a resident of Santa Fe in 1833, long before any American woman was known to have ventured there.

Donoho, with her nine-month-old daughter, accompanied her husband, William, on a rugged trip across the great plains with a trading caravan of 150 Missourians and their wagons of freight. That this twenty-five-year-old bride of sixteen months was willing to liquidate all holdings, leave family and friends, and accompany her husband to the new and primitive frontier showed great spirit and confidence.

The Donohos spent four years in Santa Fe but no documentary evidence survives to show where or how they lived. Mary did, however, have another daughter and a son while living there. When an uprising which resulted in the murder of the Mexican governor threw Santa Fe into chaos, the couple returned to Missouri. The balance of the book covers Mary's later life in Clarksville, Texas, where she ran the impressive Donoho Hotel and raised her six children, and contains details of her descendants' lives.

Thus, even the book's subtitle, "New First Lady of the Santa Fe Trail," could be a little misleading to a reader hoping or expecting details of this early female traveler's experiences on the famed route. As a biography of a hardworking, determined pioneer woman, *Mary Donoho* works, but it cannot lay claim to more than that in spite of the best efforts of both its publishers and author. —*Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

Seeing the Sooner State

Roadside History of Oklahoma, by Francis L. and Roberta B. Fugate. (Mountain Press Publishing Company, P.O. Box 2399, Missoula, Montana 59806. $24.95 cloth bound.)

This is the sixth volume of Mountain Press's popular Roadside History Series and the second written by the Fugates. Their earlier book was *Roadside History of New Mexico*. Back in 1946 they first moved to Oklahoma and became avid students of its history, touring from border to border. After being away for many years, they returned and again traveled the state. From the lead and zinc mines of the northeast to the Wichita Mountains of the southwest; from the pine forests of the southeast to the canyons of the panhandle, they took notes, and the result is a fascinating and delightful book on people, places, and events.

Oklahoma has history like no other state in the Union. By leaving the freeways and toll roads, the Fugates captured the ambience of Oklahoma's rich past. The reader is rewarded with a majestic panorama of farms and ranches, oil and gas fields, prairies and forests, tiny towns and bustling cities. Man-made lakes covering more than one million acres have put to rest Oklahoma's dust-bowl image.

Well-researched and handsomely illustrated, the book offers information on Sequoyah, Pretty Boy Floyd, Jim Thorpe, Woody Guthrie, Oklahoma's all-black communities, and how towns like Frogville and Lotsee got their names. The authors have done a superb job of selecting the many different historical highlights plus taking their readers on many side excursions to places of interest.

Whether you visit the sites in person or read about them from an easy chair, this roadside history is a must for folks wanting to know when, why, and how the twin territories joined to become the state of Oklahoma.—*Arthur Shoemaker, Hominy, Oklahoma.*

Texas Ranchers

History of the Cattlemen of Texas. (Texas State Historical Association, 2/306 Sid Richardson Hall, Austin, Texas 78712-9820. $39.95 cloth bound; $150.00 limited edition.)

This hard-cover item was originally printed in 1914 for the Cattle Raisers Association of Texas and had no identified compiler, publisher, or copyright. It contained sketches of sixty cattlemen from all over the state, but fewer than 100 copies were sold. Although it was a mug book, originally written to inform and make money, the subscriptions just weren't there. The book dropped from sight and until this printing was considered the rarest volume in rangeland literature.

Whoever compiled this work had an easy grace with words. He was complimentary to all involved and possessed a strong background in range and cattle history. The individual cattlemen paid to have their photos and biographies published.

Some biographies are quite brief; others extend for several pages. All are well-written in third person and amazingly detailed. About one-third of the subjects were already deceased when the book went to press. Names, dates, and genealogical information were furnished, as were accounts of cattle drives, Indian fights, rustler and military experiences, and bank, industrial, railroad, business, and civic connections. This was not a lightweight book then, and it is an even more significant item now. Much of the compiled information remains all that is presently available on these figures.

A few names are easily recognizable, such as Slaughter, Goodnight, and

King. The majority are lesser known, but they were strong, powerful movers and shakers in their own right.

A separate section covers the historical aspects of cattle development in Texas, and it is as detailed a chronicle of men and events up to 1914 as anything I've read. Harwood Hinton, a biographer of John Chisum, has added an excellent introduction. This is a beautiful book with a good index. If your interests run to Texas, cattle, or cattlemen, then this 350-page, slightly oversized history is an offer you cannot refuse.—*Leon C. Metz, El Paso, Texas.*

Range War in California

Sespe Gunsmoke, by Charles F. Outland. (A.H. Clark Company, P.O. Box 14707, Spokane, Washington 99214. $25.00 cloth bound.)

California has had a couple of range wars which regional historians have neglected, probably because they were of small caliber compared to the well-known Lincoln County, New Mexico, and Johnson County, Wyoming, wars. But there are two other reasons why local historians have neglected an 1877 shooting on Ventura County's Sespe Ranch.

First is the spiny nature of the tangle of contradictory testimony in the case. (Researching it must be like handling chollas without gloves!) Second is the locally embarrassing nature of the crime and its ensuing trials, which were characterized by perjuring witnesses, blundering or crooked judges, and a blatantly partisan press.

The late Charles Outland, exasperated by the silence and fibs of local chroniclers, took on the job of finding the truth. His method will appall some readers and delight others. Ignoring scholarly objectivity, he approached everyone involved with doubt, suspicion, and mistrust. His own biases are so apparent, and the 1870s figures so slippery, that this technique is rather refreshing. Certainly all of the men, on both sides, emerge smelling like skunkweed rather than roses.

The fight had many of the elements of a range war—sheep, water rights, and small settlers battling big ranchers. But the drama was played against the distinctive background of California's "squatterism," a populist revolt against a provision of the treaty ending the Mexican War which guaranteed titles to Mexican land-grant rancho owners. These huge cattle ranches were attacked by both squatter violence and landshark (politicians and shysters) litigation.

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Thomas More was in a legal fight with settlers who squatted on disputed lands of his part of the old Sespe rancho. One night his barn was torched and he was murdered.

The leading suspect, a man named Sprague, was convicted and sentenced to death. His likely co-conspirator (at least in the eyes of the victim's vengeful brother) was acquitted. Although only five men were tracked from the scene of the crime, seven were accused. Eventually, all prisoners were freed except Sprague, whose sentence was reduced to life, then to twelve years, by the governor.

Small wonder that Ventura County has been embarrassed and ashamed of the incident. Men on both sides were arrogant and violent liars. It is also no wonder that Outland is so outspoken in his denunciation of all concerned, for the case is among one of the greatest travesties of justice in the history of the West.—*Richard Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

Bear River Revisited

Brigham and the Brigadier, by James F. Varley. (Westernlore Press, P.O. Box 35305, Tucson, Arizona 85740. $21.95 cloth bound.)

In 1938 Fred B. Rogers wrote an excellent book, *Soldiers of the Overland* (a rare book today), on the West's most neglected Civil War-era general, Patrick E. Connor. This Californian's job was to keep a wary eye on Brigham Young and his "Saints"—considered treasonous since 1857—and to protect the Overland Route from Indians emboldened by the departure of Union regulars to battlefields in the East. Connor, who was later the founder of Utah's mining industry, did a first-rate job. But his reputation has been unjustly tarnished by, oddly enough, a victory.

Connor's victory at Bear River, Idaho, in 1863 over Bannocks and Shoshones was once just controversial because it was such a smashing defeat of the allied tribes and because women and children were among the 224 Indian dead. Recently, revisionist historians hoping to exorcise guilt feelings for our abuses of Indians have labeled the fight a "massacre." But at Bear River, the general lost twenty dead and forty-nine wounded out of 200 effectives. And this "murderer" left food for the 160 surviving Indian women and children before he pulled out.

Varley joins Rogers, Robert Utley, and E.B. Long in correctly seeing Bear River as a hard-fought battle, not a Sand Creek-like slaughter of innocents. His narrative is both well researched and well written. This book is highly recommended.—*Richard Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

Texas Independence

A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguin, edited by Jesus F. de la Teja. (State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin, Texas 78761. $21.95 cloth bound; $60.00 signed limited edition.)

Juan Seguin remains a tragic figure in Texas history. Not just a man without a country, Seguin was a man without two countries, a man who fought for both Texas and its war for independence, and against the young nation before it joined the United States.

Between those two military experiences, Seguin served in the Texas senate and as mayor of San Antonio. His role in the Texas revolution and his public service would have left him with impeccable credentials in the young nation, except for one thing—the color of his skin. In the racially charged years following the revolution, Seguin's Hispanic heritage made him suspect among many embittered Anglos who had lost family and property to Santa Anna's Mexican army. That prevailing racial attitude ultimately made Seguin an outcast.

A Revolution Remembered uses Seguin's apologia—his memoirs written more than a decade after the events that left him labeled a traitor—and his correspondence to tell his story. Jesus F. de la Teja has written a well-documented biography that precedes Seguin's memoirs. In addition to de la Teja's edited version of the memoirs, he has also included an unedited copy so the reader can make independent judgments about this misunderstood man.

Historians consider Seguin the first man, Anglo or Hispanic, to call for revolution against Mexico. He escaped from the Alamo to seek reinforcements, then returned after the battle to bury the ashes of its fallen defenders. He fought at San Jacinto and helped Texas win its independence, if not its peace of mind.

Texas still did not feel secure, however, and faced the constant threat of Mexican invasion. When Seguin predicted another Texas invasion, many Anglos accused him of duplicity. Once the invasion did come, Seguin's reputation was devastated when its leader pronounced Seguin his friend. Threatened in his own land, Seguin fled to Mexico where, by his account, he was given a choice of prison or fighting against Texas. He chose the latter, forever tainting his Texas reputation.

Though Seguin eventually returned to Texas, he was by then scorned like other Hispanics. Perhaps Texas today would be more at ease with itself, at least in accepting its bicultural heritage, had Seguin's message of cultural tolerance been adopted. After all, he was the first to suggest the Texas senate publish laws in both Spanish and English. Seguin was a man more attuned, perhaps, to the sensitivities of today than to those of his own time. Whatever the case, *A Revolution Remembered* allows the reader to decide. Whatever the reader's decision, de la Teja's work is a valuable contribution not just to Hispanic history but to Texas history as well.—*Preston Lewis, Lubbock, Texas.*

Little-known Badman

The Real Virginian: The Saga of Edwin Burnham Trafton, Last of the Stagecoach Robbers, by John Watson. (Westernlore Press, P.O. Box 35305, Tucson, Arizona 85740. $23.00 cloth bound.)

For more than thirty years Westernlore Press has enjoyed an enviable reputation as one of the finest publishers of quality Western Americana. Westernlore's prestige, however, has been badly tarnished by the release of this volume, which is one of the most horrid examples of the badman genre in years. Edwin Trafton was a small-time thief who achieved a measure of notoriety in 1914 when he robbed nineteen stagecoaches in Yellowstone National Park. He is hardly deserving of a full-length biography, much less one which contains the astounding number of inexcusable errors and fabrications that this book does.

The mistakes are far too many to list, but a few will suffice. The author claims on page three that D.W. Griffith directed the film *The Great Train Robbery*; it was actually Edwin S. Porter. On page thirty-three he says that the Red Legs were William C. Quantrill's guerrilla band; in fact they were Unionists who fought against Quantrill. The author says on page thirty-four that Ed Trafton visited Fort Custer in 1875; the fort was not built until 1877. He falsely claims that Ned Buntline gave Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane their names, and says on page sixty-three that "the founder of the Pinkerton Detective Agency died of blood

poisoning a few days after biting his tongue during dinner"; in fact, Allan Pinkerton died after a long illness brought on by a stroke.

On page sixty-five Watson claims Trafton was an admirer of the Doolin gang in 1877 (it did not even exist until 1892), and on page ninety-six he says that Big Nose George Parrott was a member of Butch Cassidy's gang, but Parrott was lynched in 1879 when Butch was only thirteen years old. On page eighty-six Watson says that Trafton was with the McCarty gang in an 1887 train robbery at Grand Junction, Colorado, but in fact the McCarty gang did not rob that train, nor did Trafton. Finally, on page one hundred one, he says that Trafton took part in a Telluride, Colorado, bank robbery, which actually took place in 1889 when Trafton was in prison.

The author repeatedly misspells names, such as using Wild Bill *Hickock* instead of Hickok and Colorado Charlie *Udder* instead of Utter. He is so careless with his statements that, on page forty-eight, he even calls Poker Alice a man!

Even the title of this book is false in every respect. Watson, who is Ed Trafton's grandson, claims on the first page that Trafton was the "real Virginian" of Owen Wister's celebrated novel. But Wister himself declared that Trafton's claim was "bosh," according to Darwin Payne in his authoritative *Owen Wister* (1985). Payne points out that many men claimed to be the Virginian and that Wister always said that the character was not based on any real person. Watson himself admits on page ninety-three that "it was was more likely that Wister used Ed [Trafton] as a model for the villain, Trampas." If so, why on earth did he title the book *The Real Virginian*? The subtitle heralds Ed Trafton as the "last of the stagecoach robbers," but Watson states that a different bandit pulled the last Yellowstone stage robbery a year later in 1915, thus again demonstrating the title's fallacy.

The author would have us believe that Ed Trafton was a pal of Wild Bill Hickok, that he plotted to kidnap President Chester Arthur, was a member of the McCarty gang, and that he rode with the Wild Bunch and took part in the celebrated bank robberies at Telluride and Montpelier, Idaho. If you buy all that, I've got some swamp land in Florida I'll sell you cheap. Ramon F. Adams, who spent a lifetime trying to correct such nonsense, would roll over in his grave.—*John Boessenecker, San Francisco, California.*

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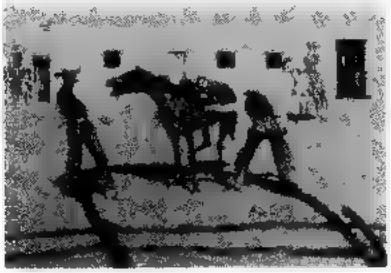

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The Death of Bear River Tom Smith

—November 2, 1870; near Abilene, Kansas—

By BILL O'NEAL

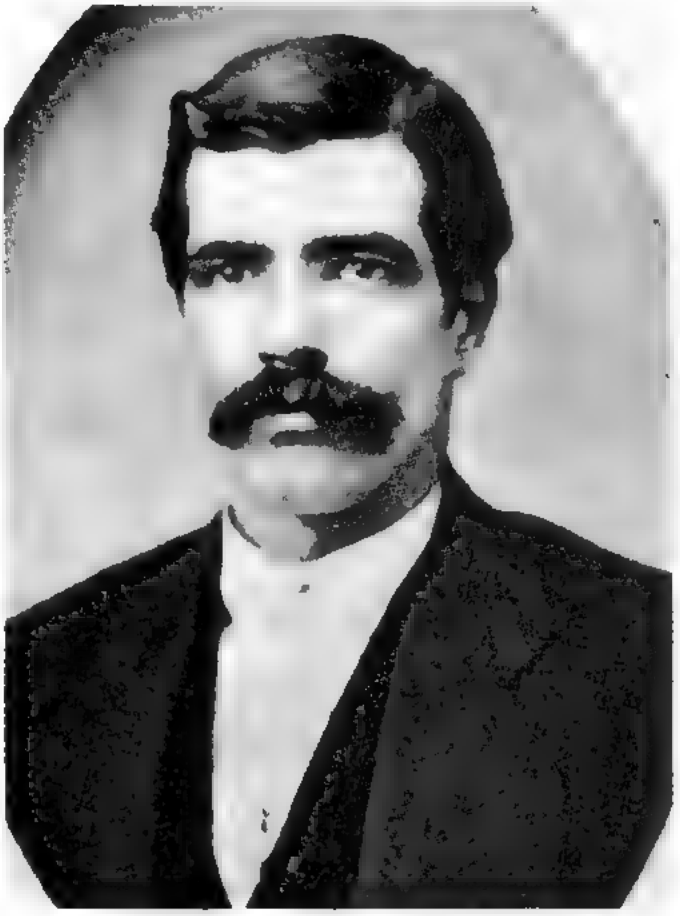
Thomas J. Smith was born in 1830 in New York City. Of Irish descent, he was reared in the Catholic faith, and is thought to have served on the New York City police force. By 1867 Smith was in Nebraska working with the Union Pacific Railroad; the following year he was doing the same type of work in Wyoming.

In 1868 a young friend of Smith was thrown in jail in Bear River City, Wyoming. Smith recruited several fellow railroad workers and descended upon the jail. A group of townspeople offered violent resistance, but the railroad men fought their way inside and freed the prisoner. Smith was severely wounded, but the "Bear River Riot" gave him his nickname.

When he recovered, Bear River Tom Smith served as marshal of several "end-of-track" railroad towns. On June 4, 1870, Smith was hired as chief of police of Abilene, Kansas, the rip-snorting railhead of the Chisholm Trail. He was to be paid $150 per month, plus two dollars for each conviction of a suspect. Soon his salary was raised to $225 monthly. Smith is best known for making it illegal to bring firearms into Abilene.

Smith patrolled the streets on a big horse named Silverheels. He sometimes wore a brace of Colts, but he was good with his fists and rarely resorted to gunplay. On one occasion Smith marched empty-handed toward a burly fellow known as Wyoming Frank, who held a pistol on him. Unflinching, Smith slugged Wyoming Frank, seized his gun, then pistol-whipped him with it.

On October 23, 1870, Andrew McConnell shot and killed a neighbor named John Shea. A warrant was sworn for McConnell's arrest, and on Wednesday, November 2, Smith and Deputy J.H. McDonald rode out to McConnell's place, a small dugout about ten miles outside of Abilene. McConnell and a friend, Moses Miles, were waiting, and the four men confronted each other.



Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

Abilene lawman Thomas James Smith firmly controlled the Kansas cowtown—until he was slain during a brutal brawl while trying to serve a warrant.

Smith read the warrant, whereupon McConnell whipped up a gun and shot him in the chest. Smith just as quickly returned the shot, wounding McConnell. The two bleeding men then grappled, while Miles and McDonald began trading shots. A bullet clipped off two of Miles' fingers, but he continued firing and succeeded in driving McDonald off the premises. (Although McDonald later served a successful tenure as marshal of Newton, Kansas, he was stigmatized in Abilene as the man who deserted Tom Smith.)

Somehow Smith was overpowering McConnell, but Miles began to hit him in the head with his gun and clubbed the lawman to the ground. McConnell and Miles then dragged the fallen officer several yards away from the dugout, and Miles picked up an ax and nearly severed Smith's head from his body.

When McDonald returned with a posse, McConnell and Miles had fled. Smith's body was taken to Abilene, where he was buried at ten o'clock Friday morning. Three days after the killing McConnell and Miles were captured, and at their subsequent trial they were sentenced to long prison terms. The following spring Wild Bill Hickok was employed as marshal of Abilene.

In 1904 Smith was paid tribute in a Memorial Day ceremony at Abilene's city cemetery. His body was removed from its obscure grave and reinterred in a prominent location marked by a large boulder. Abilene's first mayor, T.C. Henry, traveled from his home in Denver to deliver an address praising Smith. A bronze plaque on the boulder proclaimed:

THOMAS J. SMITH
Marshal of Abilene, 1870
Died, a Martyr to Duty, Nov. 2, 1870.
A Fearless Hero of Frontier Days Who
in Cowboy Chaos
Established the Supremacy of Law.

ELECTRONIC RI

The Fugitive

By TOM BEAN

A lawsuit leads to murder in Hood County, Texas.

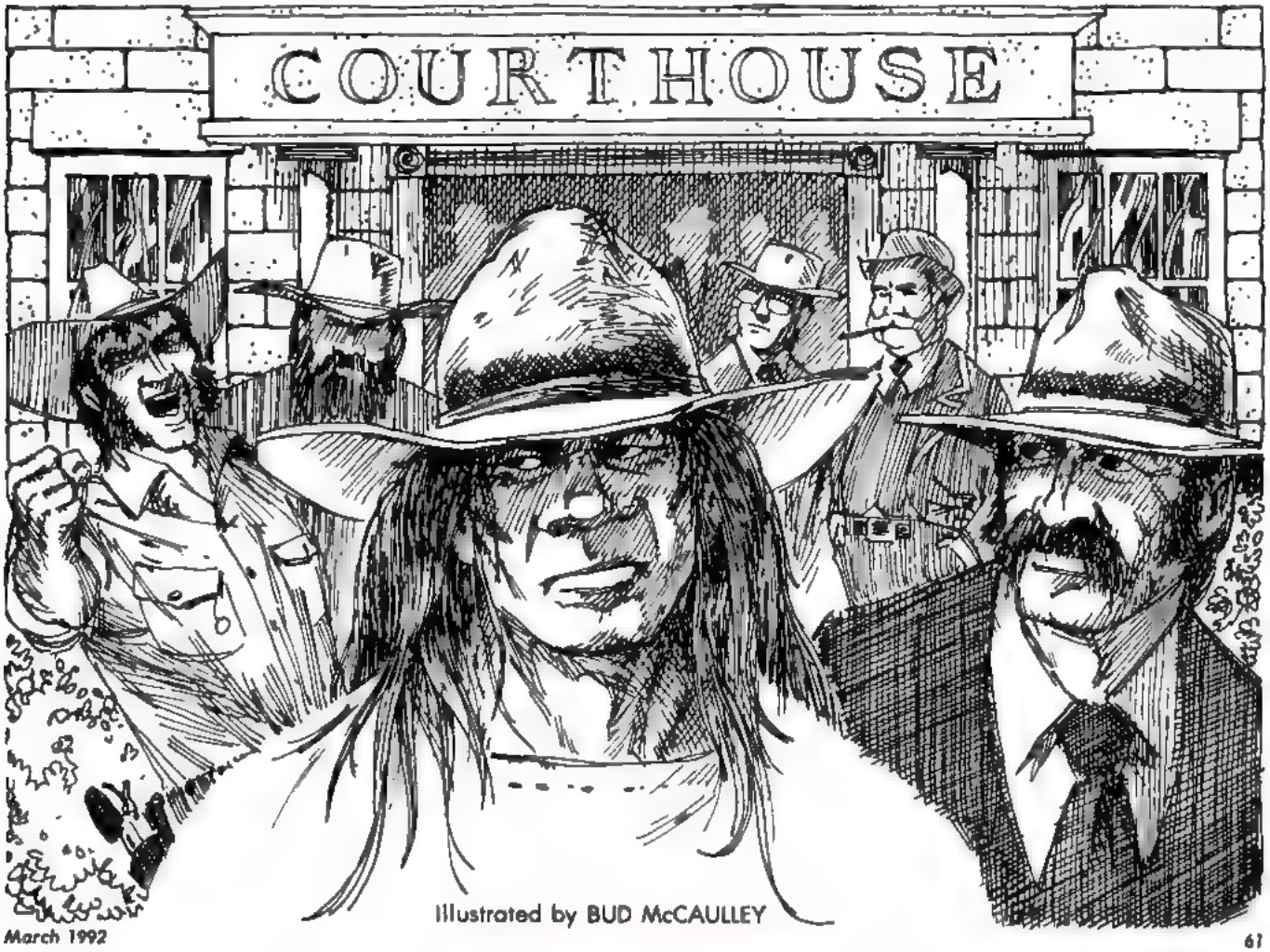
The Nelson Mitchell family, originally from North Carolina, settled in a bend in the Brazos River, about twelve miles south of Granbury, the seat of Hood County, Texas, in 1868. The Hood County courthouse burned in 1875, and there is no record of when Nelson "Cooney" Mitchell bought the land in what came to be called Mitchell's Bend. Mrs. Mitchell was part Cherokee Indian. She and Cooney were the parents of seven children, four girls, and three boys. The boys were Bill, Jeff, and Dan.

Bill, the oldest son, was practically illiterate. He had high cheekbones, dark skin, and peculiar, slanted eyes; his nose was large and his mouth was grim. He never joked. He said no one could ever run over him, and his stout body showed they would have had a hard time if they had tried. He was eighteen years old when the Mitchells arrived in Hood County.

Among the neighbors and friends of the Mitchells was the Truitt family, also from North Carolina, who moved to Hood County in the 1860s. The head of the family was T.M. Truitt. He was the father of three sons, James, Sam, and Isaac. The Truitts were about the same age as the Mitchell boys, grown young men.

T.M. Truitt borrowed money from Nelson Mitchell to pay on land and for other debts. When Truitt's note came due, he could not pay it, and Mitchell filed suit. Trial on the collection of the note was held in Granbury, March 28, 1874. T.M. Truitt was sick in bed at the time, but his three sons were in court. When court adjourned, the Mitchell crowd—Nelson and Bill Mitchell; Mit Graves, a boy working for Nelson Mitchell; Mitchell's son-in-law, William Owens; and a neighbor, D.A. Shaw—left first on the way home.

The Mitchell boys and the Truitt boys already had been having fist fights. Now a little way out of town the Truitts passed the Mitchell crowd at a gallop and made some insulting remarks. Both crowds were well armed. A little farther down the road the Truitts stopped at a creek to water their horses. When the Mitchell party overtook the Truitts,



Illustrated by BUD McCAULLEY

shooting started. Sam and Isaac Truitt were killed, and James badly wounded.

Bill Mitchell and Mit Graves fled. Graves was never heard from again. Bill went into hiding among the Becketts, a well thought of family, north of Bracketville, in Kinney County. Bill took the name of John Davis and married one of the Becketts' daughters, Mary Holliday, who was recently divorced from her husband, George Holliday, Sr. The Hollidays had three children, George, Jr.; Belle; and John. Bill and Mary were married at Seven Rivers, New Mexico, April 28, 1884, at the home of one of Mary's sisters, Arril Beckett Therrell.

In the meantime Nelson Mitchell, Bill Mitchell, Mit Graves, William Owens, and D.A. Shaw were indicted for murder. The trial of Nelson Mitchell and Shaw was held August 4, 1874. Nelson Mitchell was sentenced to be hanged; Owens and Shaw were given life sentences. Shaw died in prison, October 31, 1876, and Owens was pardoned, January 11, 1886. Nelson Mitchell's lawyers appealed his case. It was affirmed. Mitchell stayed in jail and wrote his life story and his version of the killing of the two Truitt boys. Two nights before Nelson Mitchell was to be hanged, Jeff Mitchell tried to help his father escape jail. Jail guards shot and killed the son.

In his last statement, while standing on the gallows, Nelson Mitchell called on his son, Bill, wherever he was, to take revenge on what he called his murderers. In particular, he meant James Truitt. James became a Methodist minister. He was warned about Bill Mitchell but he would not carry a gun. James gave up the ministry and bought the *Timpson Times* newspaper at Timpson in Shelby County in 1885. In 1886 Bill Mitchell found out where James Truitt was living. To satisfy his father's last request, Bill set out on a four-hundred-mile journey to find Truitt and kill him.

BY THEN, Dan Mitchell was living near Stephenville in Erath County. Bill stopped at Dan's house and revealed his plans. Dan could not talk Bill out of killing James Truitt. Bill exchanged the horse he was riding for one that he had left with Dan after the killing of Sam and Ike Truitt. A big, beautiful, fast-stepping sorrel with stocking feet, the horse attracted attention and was one of the things that helped convict Bill when he finally came to trial for the murder of James Truitt. Several witnesses against Bill remembered seeing him on the horse near Timpson, July 20, 1886, the day of the murder of James Truitt.

Bill found the Truitt home in Timpson about dark, entered the house without knocking, and found James Truitt busy writing. In Mrs. Truitt's presence, Bill shot and killed her husband. Not knowing what she was doing, Mrs. Truitt followed the killer to the porch, where he pointed his pistol at her and looked her straight in the eye. She later swore at Bill's trial that she would know Bill by his eyes. She watched the killer ride off at a gallop, and she then collapsed.

Sheriff Sims of Shelby County was about twenty miles away at Center, the county seat. He lost a lot of time in deciding what to do and gave the killer a lead in getting away. He tried to track the killer but returned to the scene of the crime empty handed. Sheriff Sims called in Sheriff A.J. Spradley of Nacogdoches for help in solving the case. Spradley found Dan Mitchell, arrested him, brought him to Shelby County, and put him in jail. Spradley told Dan that "he had the goods on him." That "big sorrel horse" was in Dan's lot. Bill had left him there, saddled his other horse and headed for the wilds of Kinney County. Spradley tried to scare Dan into confessing by telling him that a lynch mob was forming in Timpson.

Dan Mitchell had a wife and several children. They needed him. He finally told Spradley that Bill was the one that killed James Truitt, and he thought that Bill had returned to his hideout in Kinney County.

THE COURT in Shelby County was reluctant to give the sheriff of Nacogdoches County money to look for James Truitt's killer. The Truitts, however, furnished Spradley some traveling expenses, and he went to Kinney County, where he located Bill Mitchell camped on the Beckett ranch. Texas Rangers also were in the area looking for Bill. The Rangers and Spradley surrounded Bill's camp, January 1, 1887. Bill made a break through the cedars and cactus. One of the Rangers saw him and hollered "Halt" but never fired a shot. Bill got away with his horse and saddle, leaving Mary and the children with their few possessions.

In March Bill showed up at the home of the Therrells, where he and Mary had married. When Bill was introduced to Jim Burkes, the Therrells' son-in-law, Bill said, "My name is Henry Russell." No one asked any questions. The Therrells were going west to find a better place to live, and Jim Burkes was looking for a range for his cattle. Russell was made welcome to go with them. They were moving in two covered wagons, and his help would come in handy.

They traveled until they reached Magdalena, west of the Rio Grande. It was wild country. The men began cutting wood for the smelters. After a while Russell returned to Texas for his family. Mary's daughter, Belle Holliday, was now thirteen, and Russell and Mary's daughter, Maude, was five. It took them a year to get back to Silver City. They all took the name of Russell, except Mary's boys, George and John Holliday, who took the name of Carter. George later took back the Holliday name, but John used the Carter name as long as he lived. Russell went to

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work in the mines around Silver City, and George and John found jobs on some of the ranches.

"Henry Russell" had a fringe of hair just above his ears. The rest of his head was bare, and he was now called Baldy Russell.

Baldy took Mary and the girls to the vast, waterless area of sand and rock east of the Rio Grande called Jornada del Muerto (Journey of the Dead Man). One of the most desolate and untraveled areas of the West, this strip of land one hundred miles north and south and thirty miles wide belonged to the United States government. Anyone could settle there if he could find water. Baldy solved the water problem by digging a well with a pick and shovel a mile west of a place called Lava Gap. The women lifted the dirt out in buckets with a windlass, and they struck water at sixty-five feet. They drew water up by hand for the stock. They had a few horses and began to accumulate a few cattle.

Baldy sold that first well and moved on north and dug another one, built a house, corrals, put up a windmill, had a garden, chickens, and a milk cow. Whenever Baldy got a small ranch going, someone was always ready to buy him out. In 1895 he sold out again and went back to odd jobs and camping. He worked one summer at the Bar N Cross ranch on the south end of the Jornada. That was the first time his family had lived close to other people. They lived near ranch headquarters. After the summer work was over, Baldy dug another well, his fifth, not far from the first one at Lava Gap. He built a stone house and stone corrals, and again started building up a herd of cattle.

Baldy had a run-in with Jim Gilliland, a tough man who was charged with Oliver Lee and Bill McNew in the death of A.J. Fountain and his eight-year-old son, Henry. Whether Gilliland had anything to do with capturing Baldy was never known. H.N. Denny, the sheriff of Otero County, and his deputy, Ben Wooten, left Alamogordo March 23, 1907. A few days later they arrested Baldy Russell at his home without incident. He was taken back to Granbury and tried for the murder of Sam and Isaac Truitt. The district attorney could not produce witnesses, and the judge dismissed the charge against Baldy.

For the killing of James Truitt, Baldy was out on bond until March 9, 1908, when he went on trial. The jury could not agree. He was put on trial again. The jury still could not agree, and the case was moved to Cherokee County, where it came up for trial December 23, 1910. Baldy was found guilty and given a life sentence. His lawyers kept him out of jail for another year while appealing his case, which was finally affirmed. On March 25, 1912, Baldy entered Huntsville prison as number 32924. He kept a clean record until he escaped July 14, 1914. members of his family said that he was a trusty, working outside the walls, and just walked away. No effort was made to find him, and no reward was offered for his capture. His escape got little publicity.

Baldy's wife, Mary, who had been staying with some of Baldy's folks, near Stephenville, soon left for New Mexico. Baldy's actions showed that he was afraid of being caught. He hid in a cave not far from Stephenville for a while, and one of his brothers-in-law, John Johnson, brought him food and water. He finally showed up at the home of his daughter, Maude Dillard, and her husband, Sam Dillard, near Capitan, New Mexico. The Dillards rigged a light wagon, filled it with a camping outfit, and furnished a team of mules.

Baldy and Mary headed west. No more was heard of Baldy Russell; he was again John Davis, and Mary was Mary Davis. They passed through Farmington and headed on out to Arizona. At San Simon, John and Mary found some of their old friends, the Whitmires, who had been their neighbors on the Jornada. The Davises spent the last of their lives together at San Simon in a house belonging to the Whitmires. John did what odd jobs he could find and accumulated enough money to buy a Model T Ford, in which he and Mary made trips back to Capitan to see Maude. Belle, Mary's daughter, had married, moved to California, and was never heard of again.

In the 1920s Bill Mitchell began to have heart trouble. In April 1928 he had been working in his garden at San Simon and had a severe attack. George Holliday was sent for. He and his mother took Bill to the hospital in Douglas. Bill was up stirring around with Mary on one side and a nurse on the other, helping him along, when he slumped down and died standing up. He had been on the dodge for approximately forty-seven years.

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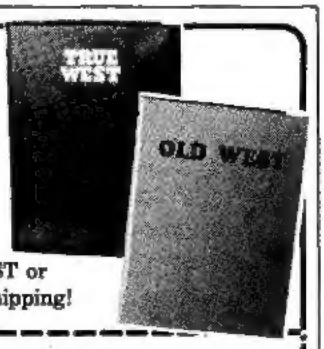

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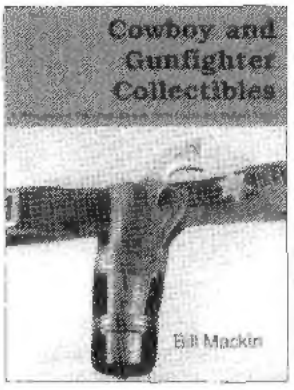

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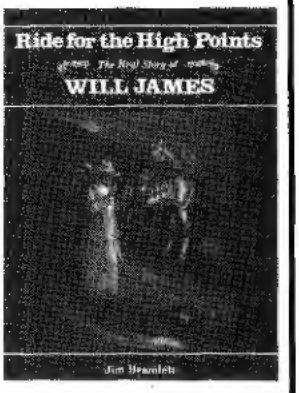

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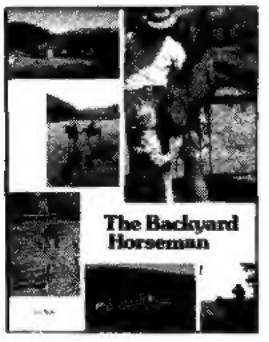

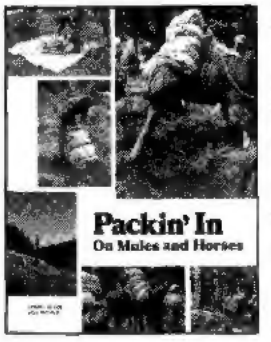

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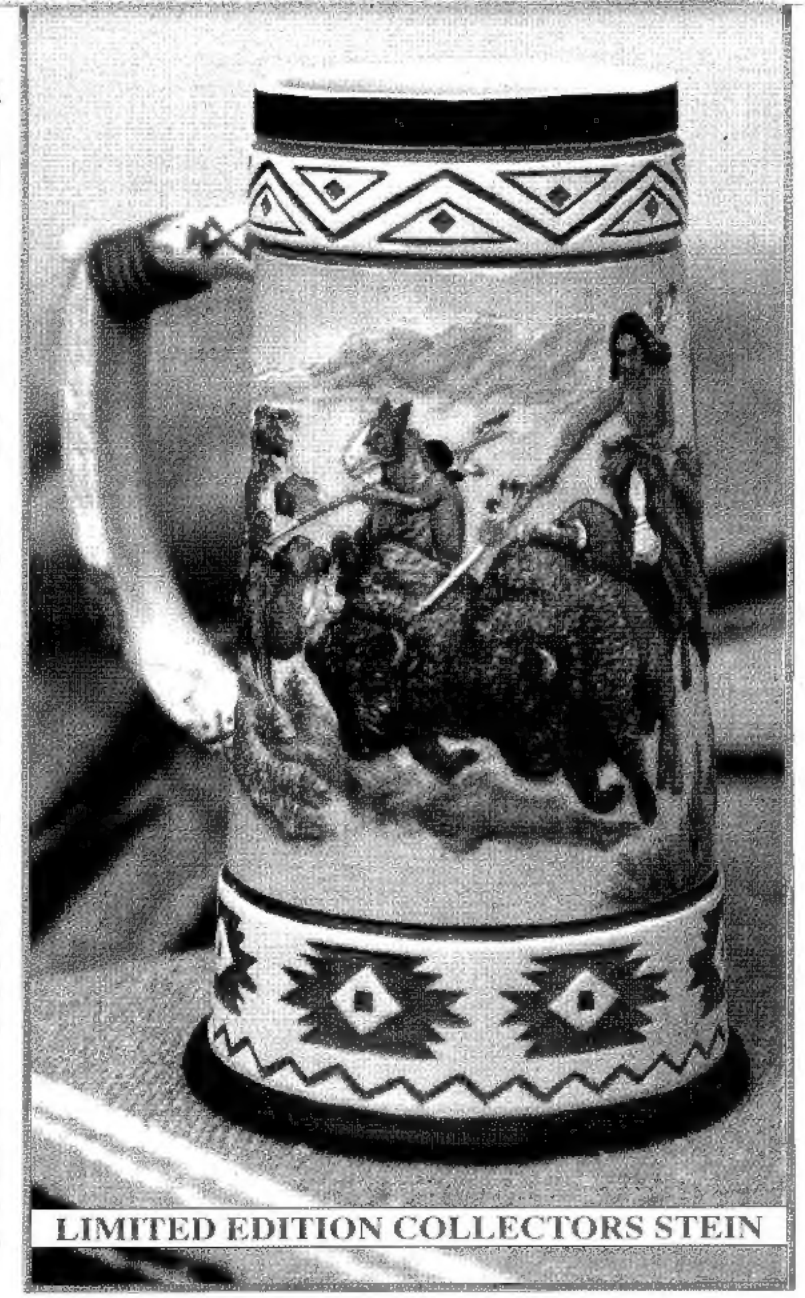

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